



GEORGEKUTTY ADAPPUR

JACK BATSON

and the Holy Grail

Must read mysterious
story that will change
your life from
failures to success

From Bestselling & Award Winning Author

JACK BATSON AND THE HOLY GRAIL

Georgekutty Adappur

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First Edition

All characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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DEDICATION

To Jancy, my dear mom, whose love, tears and prayers changed my life.

To Benny, my dear dad, who taught me to dream high.

To George, my paternal grandpa, who knows only to love me.

To Achamma, my paternal grandma, who gave me the wings of imagination.

To Eliayamma, my maternal grandma, who inspired me to entrust my duties in Jesus.

To Mathew, my maternal grandpa who prays for me in Heaven

To Mathews, my younger brother, my soulmate in everything.

To Ann, my younger sister, the naughtiest child I have ever seen.

To Chinju, my sweet wife, only because of you miracles happened in my life.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:

Jack Batson and the Holy Grail is not just a story that came out of my imagination. The quest for Holy Grail started since the very beginning of Christianity. Many people believe that the Holy Grail has magical power to change the life of people. Some secret societies and cults believe that it has a supernatural power to give eternal life to humans. Many people still believe that the real Holy Grail which was used by our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper to consecrate wine to convert into His Holy Blood is located in 'the Metropolitan Cathedral–Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady of Valencia' in Spain. It might be true. In this regard I assert that what the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church and Holy Father teach us is right. I have no comments in this matter.

You might have read many stories, but this story is entirely different to other stories. I promise you, after reading this story; your life will not be the same. This book will create a tremendous change in your life. If you wish to be successful in life, this story will help you. It doesn't matter how hard your problems are or how difficult are your situations. You may think you are helpless, hopeless or abandoned. If you feel so, I have an answer for your problem. You may ask why this disaster happened in my life. Some may say "I earned everything in my life; I am rich enough and I can afford to have everything that I desire; still, I feel emptiness in my heart". You may be alone and sad, your problem might be big or small, but I can assure you that after finishing this story, you will find the Holy Grail will help sort your issues in your life. I promise this book can change your life upside down. Once I was in the same situation where you are now; so I know the pain that you are going through in your heart. I was very sad and upset and asked myself many a times how I can tackle these problems. I searched for my Holy Grail and finally found it. I found the happiness that I lost. All these years you might have searched for your Holy Grail to make you happy This book will help you to find out your Holy Grail.

The first horrifying, Mysterious, Romantic, Motivational novel ever.

Georgekutty Adappur.

8/03/2017.

PROLOGUE

The Pacific Ocean flows very calm like a pigeon that nestles in its nest at night. In that peaceful Pacific Ocean, an invisible island is located far away from other islands and continents. No human beings from other countries intrude into it and its citizens are never interested to build a solid relationship with outsiders. The ships that pass through this way would drown into the depth of the ocean or the flights that enter into its territory crash into the sea. The name of this country is Billston.

In Billston, apart from human beings dwell many goblins, super natural creatures, wizards, witches and a variety of fairy tale creatures.

It is believed that, St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ landed here during his first voyages to preach the gospel and converted and baptised many people into Christianity. Before his arrival all the people in this island were barbarians and pagans who believed in worldly creatures and powers. The Apostle preached the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and performed many miracles that popularised Christianity in that island. During that period the people in that country who believed in barbaric religion realised that their Gods had no such powers like the Apostles of God Jesus Christ. They understood that only Jesus can cure severe diseases and raise people from death. The Apostle also commanded the worldly powers such as rains, storms and oceans, and they obeyed in the name of Lord Jesus Christ. As the result of these miracles and through the propagation of the Gospel of Love, the forefathers in that country received baptism and accepted Jesus Christ as their God, Saviour and Lord.

After their conversion to Christianity, they continued to live peacefully for nearly one thousand and eight hundred years. All these period Satan and his devils were prowling about the world doing their job making the people fight each other, making ignorant of their right to be the children of God. Thus, Satan and his fallen angels could win sowing the seeds of enmity and hatred among the people of different continents. Still the people in Billston island were living peacefully without taking heed of such demonic activities happening outside their world.

Somehow over a period of time and after a lot of struggle, the messengers of Death could enter into Billston Island too. They did the same hideous things against the people of Billston.....

When problem and confusion started among the content people of Billston, some of them approached the then Pope of the Holy Catholic Church and requested His Holiness to send somebody to help them. His Holiness sent some exorcists, demonologists and some devotees and their families to Billston Island to fight against the enemies of darkness.

Among those people were the ancestors of Jack Batson, the hero in our story. They started their adventurous journey from Kerala, one of the southern states of India.

Before narrating this story, I have to tell you more about Jack Batson. Jack Batson was born as the eldest child of a happy beautiful couple Ben and Jenna Batson. Ben Batson was a corporate businessman and in-born scientist. Ben Batson was the son of a famous physician and theologian Gringer Batson and his wife Anna Batson who was a famous novelist and poet. After the birth of Jack Batson, the happy couple were blessed with two more children. Their second child was a boy whom they called Matt, a lovely baby with round face and shining eyes, and the third one was a beautiful girl whom they called Ann. She had pretty gleaming blue eyes, lovely red cheeks and long nose.

When Jack Batson was born, he looked into the world wondrously like an alien that just came into the earth. He was not just an ordinary child; everyone considered him as useless, not a smart one like another child of his age. Some of the neighbours considered him as an inactive, lazy creature who doesn't know how to live in this temporal world. He grew up as a dreamy boy who always dreamt about his visit to fairy lands, the stories he heard from his grandma Anna.

Jack's foundation in faith and devotion to Jesus Christ was very solid. His devoted mother and grandfather taught him how to pray. He was very regular in attending the Holy Mass with his family, and recited Rosary many times a day. Every evening at 7 O' clock all the family members gathered together in the praying room for Angelus and Rosary.

Jack was passionate about reading books. They had a family library in their home completely stacked with books on many subjects including Religion, Philosophy, Psychology, History, Geography, Art, and Literature. He also had a collection of antique books dated back from B.C and the very beginning of A.D. Thus, Jack grew up in the midst of books which were his soul mates and he spent endless time in reading. Neighbours looked upon him as a moron and introvert. Nobody knew that Jack had a strong will and determination...

Even though, some people hated and ridiculed him, he never felt irritated or annoyed and never hated them back. His family always protected him and encouraged his reading habits. His parents and grandparents always cheered him by saying:

“Dear child, don’t heed attention to others. Whatever they say about you is totally wrong. We believe you and have trust in you. You are a better person than any other child in the world. A day will come when all those who insulted you would come forward to praise you.”

Jack always carried a beautiful Rosary with him that had red and green crystal beads which he has inherited from his grandfather who received it as a gift from the Holy Father Pope John Paul 2nd. Whenever Jack Batson was down in spirit he always prayed the Rosary, which made him strong. Altogether his best friends in childhood were his Rosary and the books.

Years passed by and Jack Batson grew up to a young man of twenty-eight. One day, Jack Batson was reading a book about the miracles of the Holy Eucharist that happened in different countries. The book’s name was “Jesus Christ’s Presence in Holy Mass: True Miracles Throughout Centuries”. He was reading the first chapter about the first Holy Eucharist miracle that happened in Lanciano, Italy. When the priest doubted about the presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated bread and wine in front of Him, the wine became blood, and the bread became flesh of Jesus Christ. When Jack Batson read this incident, he felt as though someone insisted him to pray right then, as if there was an urgency of prayer for somebody else.

He took out his dearest companion- the Rosary- from his pocket, knelt down as he usually did in the family prayer and started to pray by looking into the photo of the miraculous Holy Eucharist in Lanciano. He didn’t know how much time he melted in prayer. Tears started to roll down from his eyes and he tried to control his emotions, but he couldn’t. He noticed the change that happened to the image on the cover of the book that lay in front of him....It slowly came out from the page and took life. The moving Eucharistic image started to shake and suddenly a light in the form of a circle came out from it and fell upon him. Suddenly the library filled with a supernatural magnificent light as if it caught fire.

Jack Batson lost his consciousness and fell down onto the floor as though somebody knocked him down. When he opened his eyes again, he was lying on the library floor with the book he read clutched in his left hand and his dearest Rosary in the right hand. He stood up and felt a complete emptiness and peacefulness in his heart. He could forgive all the people who criticised him and he felt as though his heart’s pains had been wiped out by someone. At the same moment, he heard a prayer in Latin from somewhere else:

“Sanctus Deus, Sanctus Fortis, Sanctus Immortális, miserére nobis.”

Which means:

“Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.”

CHAPTER-1

NOVA FLOWER

After this incident, Jack Batson got up from the floor and rushed to outside. He couldn't see anyone on his way to outside. All of his family members were in another area of his gigantic house. He felt like something was happening to him. He wanted to cry. He felt sorry for his mistakes that he had done against Jesus, his family members and others. When the people ridiculed him, he got upset and grumbled in his mind like the apostles said to Jesus, Lord send your fire from Heaven and burn them into ashes. He couldn't understand what was his mistake. So, he hated them and cursed them as they cursed and hated him. Now, something happened to him. He felt complete coldness from head to toe, especially inside his heart. He understood, something had happened to him. A feeling of joy, repentance and love filled his whole heart. He felt like someone was talking to him from inside.

"Dear child, why are you crying?" A voice asked him from inside.

"Is it real or I got some hallucinations after that incident happened to me in the library?" He thought himself in his mind.

"Why do you think, it is hallucination, my dear child?" He heard the inner voice more clearly.

"I think, I am going mad!" He thought again and spoke to himself.

"Are you going to meet Nova Flower?" The voice asked him.

"Yes!" Jack Batson answered as he got into the car. This time it was not an inner voice, it was clearly heard with his own ears.

"But, who are you?" He asked.

"I am Jesus Christ, who loves you more than everyone, even when you torture me with your sins. Do you know that?" The voice replied.

"So, if you are really Jesus Christ, why don't you give me an apparition?" He asked the voice as he started the car and moved his car to the main road.

"Because, you don't wish to see me as much as you wish to see your parents and Nova the girl you love."

“I love my parents, but, I don’t love any girl!” He said.

“Don’t tell lies to me, my child, I know you very well than anyone and I care for you and love you more than anyone else. So, speak the truth. If you don’t love her, why do you go and meet her whenever you are free and why do you follow her and dream of her all the time?”

“Because, she is my best friend, that’s all. I am not in a mood to love a girl, because girls are the most difficult things whom nobody can understand. They will smile in front of us when they hate us inside, they will show love and compassion towards us and stab us from behind. That’s their nature, then how can you tell me, I love her?” Jack Batson asked hiding his anger.

“Now, you may be angry, because you couldn’t express your love towards her. Still, you hide your love towards her, you love her inside your heart. That’s why you go now to meet her. And don’t judge anyone by comparing them to others. Each person is unique and most of them are good. Do you think all boys are good enough? So, don’t judge others. But, even in the people you consider as bad, if you check inside their heart, there will be something good, except the people enslaved by the devils. I know how much you do love her. I tell you the truth that, she will become your wife one day. You will think, it is not going to happen and it is impossible. But I assure you, she will become your wife one day. I am not your master and you are not my slave. I am your father who does love my children more than me. I told you this only because you asked me many times, who will become your wife. I didn’t answer you that time, because that was not the time, but, this is the right time.”

“Are you joking my Lord, you know she can’t love me as her husband. Sometimes, she talks to me rudely as I have done some severe mistakes, then I felt like she hates me. Then how is it possible?”

“IF YOU HAVE A GREAT DREAM AND STRONG DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE IT, EVEN IF THE WHOLE WORLD PREVENTS YOU AND ALWAYS MAKES OBSTACLES AGAINST YOU, ME, YOUR LORD AND GOD WILL STAND IN FRONT OF YOU AS A WARRIOR TO DEFEND YOU, PROTECT YOU AND FIGHT FOR YOU TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR DREAM.”

“But, how do I know, you are Jesus and your promise is going happen? Can you give me a sign?”

“You don’t believe my words, but, when that miracle happens, you would believe. So, as a sign to reveal that I am Jesus Christ and what I said was true, I am going to give you a sign. When

you reach by the river side where you told her to wait, she will be in a white wedding gown, and she would hold a rose flower to give you. When you ask her why she hold that flower, and is she crazy to wear the wedding dress she would answer you by saying, dear Jack, you are the best friend, I ever had in my life. When you are with me, I am always happy. To be frank with you, dear Jack, I think it is the best day ever in my life. That's why I wore this wedding dress and held this rose flower. The rest of what is going to happen, you will see for yourself."

"But, how it is possible?" He asked doubtfully, while pulling over the car and stopping by the road side to get an explanation from that mysterious voice who claims himself as Jesus Christ.

"YOU SEE A MOUNTAIN IN FRONT OF YOU AND YOU WANT TO COMMAND IT TO MOVE AWAY FROM YOUR PATH. IF YOU WOULDN'T COMMAND, IT WILL STAND THERE FOREVER, BUT, IF YOU SAY TO MOVE, IT WILL OBEY YOU. NOBODY CAN'T BUT OBEY A PERSON WITH STRONG FAITH, GREAT DETERMINATION AND FERVENT PRAYER."

"So, Lord what will be next?" Jack Batson asked.

"You will propose to her and she would tell you to do something special to marry her, something extra ordinary and something which other people can't do."

"Why Lord, why is it like that?"

"Because, she is ready to give her hand in marriage, if you can impress her parents. So, she will suggest a way. If you do, what she would ask you, she will be yours. That's what she thinks. But, I have another way to prove to you. From today, you are going to see and experience my miracles throughout your life. I ASSURE YOU, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PERSON WHO BELIEVES IN GOD."

"But Lord, do you think it is possible for a person whom other people think useless?"

"DEAR CHILD, IF SOMEBODY SPEAKS SOMETHING AGAINST YOU, IT IS THEIR MISTAKE. DON'T JUDGE THE VALUE OF YOUR LIFE FROM WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SPEAK ABOUT YOU. ALWAYS THINK THAT YOU ARE A KING, EVEN IF OTHER PEOPLE SAY THAT YOU ARE A BEGGAR. WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF WILL BE WHAT YOU BECOME. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE YOUR PRICELESS LIFE FROM OTHER PEOPLE'S JUDGEMENT."

"So, what do you think Lord, is it a practical thing, she is going to tell me?"

“POSSIBILITY TO SUCCESS IS, HOW YOU TAKE DECISIONS UPON THE GOALS, AND THE WAYS YOU FIND OUT TO FULFIL IT. Let’s wait and see. But, remember, when you need my help, I will be there to help you. So, see you soon.”

“But, Lord, how can I?” Jack Batson asked while he started the car again, but he couldn’t hear any more voice. The Lord had disappeared. But, he could see a small light that went out from the dash board and flew towards the sky and disappeared. As the light passed through, the branches of the trees that stood beside road side started to dance and the clouds moved to both sides to give it way. He could see something written by the cloud:

“MAY THE GRACE OF THE LORD WILL BE WITH YOU AND ALL HIS PEOPLE.

Jack Batson drove the car and finally reached the park where he already planned to meet with Nova. He could see her sitting on a bench, beside a wooden square shaped table. On the table, in front of her, a bottle of sparkling grape juice, two wine glasses, two burgers and two packets of potato chips, a bottle of tomato sauce and two large pizzas were arranged. He remembered, she told him once that, she loves those kinds of food very much. And as the Lord Jesus Christ said she was clad in a white wedding gown and she had a red rose flower in her hand.

“Hi, Nova, how are you dear? Why do you wear this wedding dress? Are you on your wedding celebrations, today?” Jack Batson smiled and asked as he approached her.

“Dear Jack, you are the best friend, I had in my whole life. When you are with me, I am always happy. To be frank with you, dear Jack, I think it is the best day ever in my life. That’s why I wore this wedding dress and this rose flower.”

When Jack Batson heard this answer, he was really shocked and realized that it was Jesus Christ who talked to him. Then he said in his mind ‘thank you Jesus for talking to me, a miserable sinner!’

“Please do sit down, Jack. I want to talk with you more. That’s why I told you to come here today!”

“So, you have something important to tell me. Am I right?”

“Yes, Jack, I want to talk to you personally, but, I don’t know how to start it?”

“You know, I am your best friend, so you can tell me everything without inhibitions.” He really thought, she was going to propose to him. So, he continued:

“So, my dear child, what would you like to tell me?”

“You know, I am working as a doctor in Our Lady of Lourdes hospital for around two years now. I have told you many times about, Richelles, one of my senior doctors of your age. He was very friendly with me, and yesterday, he proposed to me. He told me, he was watching over me for these two years, but afraid to tell me that he was loving me for some reason or other. But, yesterday, he told me clearly, he loves me, and he asked my opinion about that. But, I told him, I want to ask my parents, what they think about it. Then, when I went back home, I told my parents about it, and they already knew him and he is one of the best doctors in the hospital where I am working now. So, when my parents heard about this proposal they are very happy. So, my mom gave me this wedding dress to wear which she had worn in her wedding day, but, she insisted me not to wear it until my wedding. But, do you remember my promise to you? One day, we were sitting in this same park, on this same bench. It was eleven years before. Then you told me that you prefer to see me in my wedding dress, than any other dress. When I heard that I told you, I am just 14 years old kid, and I had to pass minimum ten or eleven years before fulfilling your wish. Then you told me to promise you that, you should be the first person to be fortunate to see me in my wedding dress. So, I promised. That’s why I wore this wedding dress today only to show you and thus you are the first person seeing me in the wedding dress and I kept my promise.”

“My dear child!” His head sank down and he felt like tears filling his eyes. He gripped on the bench with his two hands, took a paper towel from the table and wiped away his tears.

“Why do you cry, Jack? Why you became sad? I thought you will be happy to hear my wedding news? Then why, why... you are sad? After my marriage, I promise, I will really miss you than anyone in this world. But, what can I do, Jack? I will really miss my best friend, my angel in my life.”

“How could you be cruel to me like this, my child? You remember that day, I made you to promise me that I should be the first person to see you in your wedding dress. Yet, you didn’t understand what I meant. How could you be so foolish? Why couldn’t you even understand that I was telling I love you and wish to marry you. I was scared to tell you directly, because I thought if I tell you the truth, I would lose your friendship and you would stop talking to me. So, now, you found another person to love you and want to get rid of me. How could you be so cruel? I never expected you would do this to me!” He covered his eyes and face with his hands and started to weep.

When he lifted his head, and looked at Nova's face, she was also crying.

"I am sorry, I didn't know that, you were loving me, I didn't know that, you were waiting for me all these years. I was angry with you when you rejected the marriage proposals from good girls. Even then you didn't tell me anything. But, I was an innocent girl and didn't even understand, you were loving me. You know, I was just 14 years old, and at that age, love from a boy was very difficult for me to understand."

"So, you have decided to leave me alone. You know the last eleven years, I was thinking and crying only for you. But, you didn't realize that. Still, you feel like I am joking, but, my dear child it is my life, please... I beg you... try to understand me. You don't know, how much I was loving you all these years by forgetting myself."

"What can I do, Jack? I am sorry, I am helpless. I don't know what to say! Do you think, I am happy to leave you alone? What you told me just now was the thing I was longing to hear from you all these years. But, you never opened your mind. So I thought, you considered me as your sister. Still, I was waiting for you. What should I do now? I am sorry Jack if I hurt you."

"I don't know anything Nova. I am totally helpless now. You don't understand my agony. You are a successful doctor, but look at my life. I was wasting all these years without earning anything. I stopped my studies because I thought that it is a waste of time. I wasted all my time doing nothing. The only positive thing I can say about myself is I read many books and got some knowledge out of it. My parents, your parents and even you advised me to give up my laziness, still I adhered into my usual habits. I never thought I will lose you. But, can you please help me? Tell your parents, you don't like that guy and you need some more time to improve your career. Tell them something and block this marriage to give me time or else I will lose you forever."

"If I do so, if I wait for you, will it help? I am not saying that I can't wait for you. What I mean is, if I do so, can you assure me something positive from you...and..." Nova became emotional and she couldn't finish her words.

"I promise you Nova, if you tell your parents as I told you, then, I will get some breathing time to impress your parents. Don't be cruel to me, my child. Please try to understand me. You know my heart. At present I am a big zero having nothing to impress your parents. But, I request you to wait for one year. Then I can prove the world that I am the most suitable husband for you."

“But, what...what are you going to do? Do you know, if I can become your wife, I will be the happiest girl in the world? But, please tell me your plan...how are you going to impress my parents to get me as your wife?”

“My dear child, to be frank with you, I don’t know what to do now. I want to do something special and become famous to impress your parents, to get you as my sweetheart. But how is it possible dear child? Do you have any suggestion that help me to become rich and a celebrity? As you know all these years, I was longing and dreaming to become an adventurer, because it was my next greatest dream in life.”

“But you told me earlier that it was your greatest dream!”

“No, my dear child, it isn’t!”

“Then what is the greatest dream in your life?”

“My greatest dream in life? You know it.... It is only to marry you my sweetheart.”

“But, how it is possible Jack, how can you marry me? If you are willing to marry me, I am ready, but, how is it possible? I love my parents, and you know, I don’t want to hurt them by deciding on my own selection. I want them to choose for me, because, I promised them that I won’t take my own decision without their consensus. As you know it was their hardships, tears, and struggles, the reason why I am here. So I am helpless, as I already promised them. If I didn’t give them my word I could have done something for you. Then I wouldn’t have to make you despair.”

“Then go and marry that person who proposed you yesterday.” Jack Batson’s face turned red.

“Did I mean that? Did I tell you that I want to marry that person who proposed me just yesterday? Do you think I didn’t want you in my life? Why do you talk like that Jack? Please try to understand me. If I was an orphan, I wouldn’t have hurt you! But you know, how can I hurt my parents, when they have big plans about me?”

“That’s why I told you to marry that guy and spoil your life. Look here... You should remember one more thing...here will be a person who would love you and wait for you until his death. I won’t forget you, even after that!”

“Dear Jack, please don’t talk about your death. Here I am... Tell me what should I do?”

“I told you already.... give me one year, then I can do something. I promise you...your parents will agree with my request, because, I believe that nothing is impossible to God.”

“I shall wait for you Jack, I shall wait for you.”

“Thank you my dear child. Now, I have no time to waste. The food is getting cold. Let’s enjoy this food and go home.”

Jack cut a slice of pizza and gave to Nova. She smiled and poured the French sparkling wine into glass. They sipped the wine, it was sour and sweet. The wine bubbles slowly disappeared from the surface while they drank. They ate a few slices of pizza and emptied the tumbler.

The sun was sinking down into the Pacific Ocean and it glowed like a red coal. Nova’s beautiful face reddened by the sun rays. A pair of wild geese was flying towards its nest in the distance.

“So, where did you park your car?” Jack Batson broke the silence.

“No, I didn’t bring my car, I came by walk.”

“Then I shall drop you home.” Jack Batson said and he looked into her beautiful eyes. He felt as though it was glistening with love for him. He realized at that very instance, he doesn’t want to miss her for anything.

“My dear Nova, will you marry me?” He whispered again.

“I don’t know Jack what to say! I can hurt neither you nor my parents. I want to see everyone being happy. The only thing I can do is pray for you to fulfil your dream. So every day, I shall go to Saint Vianney’s Church for Holy Mass and recite Rosary for you. Don’t be afraid, God will help you, don’t get stressed. That’s the only thing I can tell you now. So, when we are going to meet again?”

“I shall meet you soon my sweetheart before it is too late. I trust in God and I am sure He will open up some ways for me.”

They got into the car and left. While Jack Batson driving the car, he narrated the prophetic words he experienced. While they talked about this, Jack Batson could hear a mysterious voice talking to him:

“GOD ALWAYS CHOOSE THE HUMBLE AND ABANDONED AS HIS INSTRUMENT OF MIRACLES”. Finally, they reached in front of Nova’s house and the darkness had spread everywhere. But, the moon was gleaming over them, as though it felt jealous towards those lovers. Jack Batson dropped her there.

“Jack, why can’t you come in and say hi to my parents and my younger brother?”

“Not now, sweetie. I will come one day to tell your parents that, I love you. See you soon.”

“Jack, you don’t need to doubt about what I am thinking about the prophesy and Jesus’ voice that you heard. I believe fully what you told me. The whole world may distrust you, but, I believe you. If Lord Jesus Christ has told you that, you should have faith in Him. So, bye Jack. Hope to see you soon. I have one more request, please try to attend Holy Mass and recite Holy Rosary every day. That will give you the power to see and experience God in your life.”

“Sure Nova. I am ready to do anything to get you as my wife.”

“Jack, it is not for marrying me. You don’t know, how lucky you are. You are blessed to hear the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ. When His Holy Spirit come into your life nothing will be impossible for you. So, pray to get anointed by the Holy Spirit and give the rest of your dreams in Jesus’ hands. I am sure, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will see and experience miracles in your life. God will never abandon you, he will hear your prayers and you will make impossible things possible.”

“OK, Nova, see you soon!”

Jack Batson left the place. On the way back home, the rain started to fall mercilessly and lightning appeared in the sky. The Moon had hidden behind the dark rainy clouds, as though it was scared of the bad weather. Then he heard the mysterious voice like before:

LET THE PEOPLE CRITICISE AND JUDGE YOU. BUT, NEVER LET YOURSELF BE A LAUGHING STOCK FOR OTHERS. REMEMBER, GOLD NEEDS FIRE TO GET PURIFIED AND SEED NEEDS TO BE ABANDONED IN THE GROUND TO SPROUT OUT AS A TREE.

When Jack Batson reached home, it was 9’O clock. He was tired and had no energy to go back to the library to continue his reading. He went to his room and knelt down. He looked at the image of Holy Family, took his rosary and started to pray. After the prayer, he went to bed.

Days passed swiftly. Jack Batson was searching for a way to fulfil his dream to become a famous adventurer. Yet he couldn't find anyway. But, like Nova said, he continued to attend Holy Mass and recite Rosary every day. He understood that it was not easy to fulfil his dreams by achieving his goals. Still he had a hope that GREAT DREAMS, STRONG DETERMINATIONS, FERVENT PRAYERS AND ARDENT DESIRES WOULD NEVER GO UNANSWERED BY GOD.

One day he was all alone at home. His parents, grandparents and siblings had gone for a picnic with Nova's family, as Nova's dad and Jack Batson's dad were friends. Nova couldn't go with them because she was very busy with her work in the hospital. So Jack Batson also decided that he is not going for the trip.

After his breakfast, he went to the letter box. He could find only one mail in the letter box which was addressed to him:

"To,

Mr. Jack Batson

Batson Family Castle

Danger Forest"

He opened the letter and read the following words:

My dear Jack Batson,

As you know, we didn't have any acquaintance before. Yet, I send this letter to request your urgent help in an important matter that I am dealing with. It is an important job that would give you an attractive payment. A gorgeous couple from your family circle, their small child and their friend came to meet me yesterday. Their request was very appealing and hence I couldn't deny it. Still, I don't understand, how they came to know that I was seeking help. It is a confidential matter that may affect the popularity of many people. I was looking for a trustworthy person to handover this duty.

Your relatives told me that you are the most suitable person for this. I can't write more in this letter, due to the confidential nature of this subject. But I promise you, if you would accept

this offer you will be rewarded with an attractive payment. I would like to meet you in person tomorrow afternoon, if it is OK with you to discuss more in this regard.

May the Holy Family's blessings be with you always.

With Love,

Father John of the Cross.

Vicar of the Holy Family Catholic Church

Rosary Village."

CHAPTER-2

VISIT OF FATHER JOHN OF THE CROSS

After reading the letter, Jack Batson couldn't control his curiosity to know more about the subject that mentioned in the letter. Father John was a famous preacher and Jack was amazed thinking what the confidential responsibility that he was going to entrust him.

"If the letter is genuine, he is coming to meet me today!" Jack Batson said to himself.

Jack felt that the time was crawling like a caterpillar. He checked the clock impatiently. Finally, the clock struck at twelve and his heart started beating like a roaring ocean. Each seconds and minutes seemed crawling at a snail's pace and he felt that the time was stagnant. He turned his eyes down from the clock and looked impatiently through the window at the road. He expected his guest there, but he couldn't see anyone. He stared back at the clock and lost his patience.

One more hour passed and finally the clock struck One.

"Tuck, Tuck!"

This time he could hear somebody knocking at the front door. He was impatient and eager to see his visitor and ran towards the main door to open it.

When he opened the door, he could see a clean shaved young gentleman in his mid-thirties. He was clad in a catholic priest's black cassock and white collar.

"I am Father John of the Cross, and I think, you are Mr. Jack Batson. Am I right?"

"Yes, father. Please come in and take a seat!" Jack Batson said.

As Father John entered the room, he looked around and noticed the highly expensive paintings of Holy Trinity, Holy Family, Angels and saints that were hanging on the wall.

"These paintings are marvellous. Whose work is this?" He asked.

"You like them Father? Some are the paintings of famous artist Michael Artherton and Richard Patrick, but the rest are from a famous artist Ruperto of Cupertino of Italy. My dad is a great fan of paintings. He has a collection of attractive paintings from all over the world."

“To be frank with you, I am very happy to be here in this beautiful house. Can you please tell me more about this splendid house? Who is the builder of this house and when was it built?”

“Actually, this house was not built recently. I think, this is around 600 years old and built by one of my great ancestors, Gonzalez Batson, who was richer than the King at that time.”

“He must be a great architect of that time!”

“Yes, he was not only an architect, but also a famous physician. He used to travel around the neighbouring countries for treating patients with severe illness.” Jack Batson replied proudly remembering about his ancient house and his rich ancestor.

“O.K. Now I understand how your ancestors could build such a palatial bungalow that can accommodate hundreds of people together.”

“Yes, father.”

“Actually, I am very much eager to know your opinion about the case that I am going to discuss with you. Still, many people are afraid of the incidents happened there....but how it happened is still a mystery.”

“Father, don’t worry, whatever may be your problem, I am ready to help you. I don’t understand why you came here to seek my help rather than seeking other persons help? Why me in particular, Father? Another thing I don’t understand is about the people who referred my name? Can you please tell me more about them?”

“They came to my vicarage after 7:30 in the evening, soon after I finished my Rosary. I was sitting in front of the dining table to have my dinner. Then the calling bell rang and I thought it might be the chaplain. When I opened the door, I could see a beautiful lady standing outside carrying a charming infant in her arms accompanied by two young men. It was pitch dark, yet I could see the radiance on their faces. As I looked at them, my eyes blinked as if I was looking at the scorching sun rays.

They were quite noble people, I have never seen such gorgeous people in my life before. They introduced themselves to me. The couple’s name were Joe and Maria and their lovely child’s name was Emmanuel and their friend’s name was Mike. The moment I opened the door they looked like angels appeared from heaven! Husband Joe and Mike were young and handsome and appeared to be in their thirties. The lady seemed like a late teenager and the child was looking around three years old.

I felt very light and an inner peace frothed inside my heart that lasted for a long time. I welcomed them in even before asking who they were, because I felt them very special and magnificent. I am sure anybody would have loved to welcome such pleasing personalities to their home. When they entered my room, I felt like four Suns descended from the sky. Indeed, I didn't feel uncomfortable even though they intruded into my privacy, instead, it was like a pleasant surprise like getting a celebrity visiting your home unexpectedly.

I felt very comfortable by their presence and I wished and prayed that they should be with me forever. I strongly wished that they shouldn't go away from me. They looked like angels to me and I whispered whether they were God's messengers. When they heard my question, they smiled and Joe unravelled my past life:

"Father John of the Cross, you are the last child of your parents, and born into your family after your three brothers and two sisters. You always wanted to become a detective, but you accepted Jesus' call and entered into priesthood. Your brothers and family are peasants and all of them stay in the same house with your parents in the village Ursula. Your two sisters also got married to two noble twin brothers and live in the same village."

I was stunned and my eyes were widely opened for a few minutes in great amazement.

"But, Sir, how did you know that?" I was really astounded by these revelations made by that strange person. Even though, I am a famous preacher only my closest friends knew that my family lived back in Ursula.

"We know everything about you. You are the Minister General, the worldwide Superior of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin. I am sure if we tell something more, it will be beyond your imagination. We know you were searching for something *priceless* which was stolen from the monastery of Holy Face of Jesus. Am I not right? You are behind the Holy Chalice, which is also known as the Holy Grail. But you don't have any clear plans to retrieve it. Yet you are not willing to seek help from the Police as you wish to keep it as a secret. You wish to hide this news from everyone, even from His Holiness, because your friend the Abbot of the Monastery has requested you not to. He has instructed you 'never tell anyone, even to Holy Father or to the Police'. So, you were planning to entrust this task to someone whom you can believe completely. True?"

"Yeah, you are right, Sir! But, how did you get this information which we were keeping within us as a top secret? There is no chance for it to be leaked out through the media as only three

individuals know about it. It is me, the Abbot and Jesus Christ! I think the Abbot has told you about it!”

“No Father, it is not from the media or from the Abbot that we knew about this incident. The way we know about this matter is a mystery! The stolen Holy Grail, used by our Lord Jesus Christ in His last supper is one of the most invaluable treasures that belong to the church. If you want you can keep this theft as a secret forever, as the Holy Grail was safeguarded in the underground chamber from public where only your eminence, the Holy Father and the Abbot of the Monastery have access. The only chance for another person to know about this incident is while the newly elected Abbot or Minister General is *enthroned*. The monastery is following a tradition that only after the death of the current Abbot they would choose another one. But in your case, you are a saintly Minister General and everyone do like you, there is no chance for your position to be replaced. So this would have continued as a hidden secret for many years to come. Still you don’t know why the abbot has told you, not to tell anyone about this theft.”

“Exactly Sir, I am wondering how did you get this precise information?”

My mind was totally turbulent by the revelations of these strange visitors. Yet I tried to conceal the frustration on my face. How can a robber steal the Holy Grail by breaking into the underground chamber that is secured with the highest security systems? The robbers have done their job skilfully even without leaving a trail on the security cameras.

This time Mike answered:

“Father, we are the envoys of the Roman Catholic Church and you can call us either the protectors or well-wishers. Our mission is to protect the Church, defend God’s people and make them closer to God. Still if you are asking us who and what we are we have only one answer to give you, we are just the humble servants of Jesus Christ.”

These words dissolved my pride and I realized I am nothing before them. From my inner heart, I got a vision that the mission of their visit is to entrust me to retrieve the stolen Holy Grail. At this stage I became stronger in my mind and my ears were totally prepared to take any orders from them.

“Yes Master, what to be done?” I humbled myself.

“Could you give me direction how to achieve this goal? I am sure it won’t be a cake walk!” I was waiting for his response.

There was a spell of silence for a few moments.

“So, what do you think, Your Highness? I beg you, please give me guidance.” I repeated.

“We know a young man who is an efficient investigator and a smart adventurer, who may be able to probe into this case. Nothing is impossible in this world. So don’t be afraid. Our emissary will undertake this case. We promise that, he is the most suitable to deal with this case.”

“If you can vouch for him then how can I contact him?”

“He is a lovely 27 years old gentleman and his name is Jack Batson. Whoever come across likes him very much. He is known to us since his childhood, because he is one of our relatives. That’s why we refer him to you to accomplish this mission.”

“Sure Sir, I shall try.”

“IF YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOAL, NEVER TRY, JUST DO IT, THE WINNERS NEVER TRY, THEY ALWAYS DO IT. If you trust our words, you can approach him. This is his address. You can go and meet him directly.” Mike gave me your business card.

Their words and promises were influential and undeniable that penetrated through my mind. I trusted and decided to come over from Rosary Village to Danger Forest to meet you personally. I am fully confident that you can fulfil this task.”

Father John of the Cross finished his narration and looked around the paintings again. While Father John described all these incidents, Jack Batson was frantically trying to figure out the details. Jack realized that Fr. John was still hiding something in his turbulent mind and some secrets were haunting him.

“Father, I know, something is stirring you. It seems like something more has to come out of your mind. What is it? No inhibitions please. Probably that might be the thread that will take me through this adventure.”

“Dear Jack, I think, Doomsday is coming soon...there was a prophesy that I have read a few years ago. If it is true, something bad is going to happen very soon. It was the prophesy of Saint Malachy. It was written by him, which says:

‘When two Vicars of Christ will be in the Holy City, one would give up his authority completely for the other. Then his successor will be in reign, then suddenly, Holy Grail will disappear

from its sacred place. To torture the new Vicar of Christ, the enemy of Christ will be born into the world. Many people will lose their faith and some people, even the clergy will be against that saintly Vicar. Then the enemy of Christ, who was born from a woman who lives in complete sinful life, will be lurking and prowling about the world gathering all the people to destroy the Church and defeat its leader. Many people will have to suffer a lot for their faith. But, don't be afraid, Jesus will come at the right time to save you."

Jack Batson was shocked while Fr. John narrated the prophesy.

"Father, do you think, Antichrist was born into the earth?" Jack Batson asked.

"Still, I don't know, Jack. But, I think, all these scandals against the Church, the sufferings of Christians all over the world for their faith and the war of the countries against each other are symbolizing the birth of Antichrist. Besides, you know, it is the first-time Holy Grail has been robbed, after it had been kept for many centuries in the monastery of Holy Face of Jesus." Father John of the Cross stopped for a moment and wiped away his sweat from his forehead. Then he continued:

"In my opinion, the Holy Catholic Church is in danger, the Judas Iscariots from inside and their alliance from outside are trying to defeat the church and believe me, even our Holy Father's life is in danger. Satan is wandering everywhere by cheating even the clergy. This one percent evil inside the Church is making plans to destroy the Church completely. As a priest, I have my own limitations to fight against these issues."

"Father, believe me, do you think that, the Church is helpless? I can assure you it is not like that as you think. If one of our brothers is a criminal, will you say that our mother is a evil woman? No, nobody will say that! The one percent of Judas Iscariots inside the church including the clergy, nun and laymen may try to defeat the Church, but the rest 99 percent are with us. Remember, Holy Trinity one God- the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are with us. Holy Mary, mother of God, Saint Joseph, foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ all are with us. St. Michael the Archangel, all other Archangels, Angels, Saints, all the Holy Souls in purgatory are also with us. Then why should you be afraid, Father? Let the evils do what they can to destroy the Mother Church and we can do what we can with the help of our Lord to defend the church. Let's see who will win!" Jack Batson said very proudly and looked at Father John of the Cross. He seemed very nervous and deep in thought.

Still, Jack Batson was wondering, how fast everything could be changed. Jack Batson was longing to become an adventurer for many years. He prayed well and tried for it for many years. But, whatever he tried never helped him to fulfil his dream. He was a total failure not just for himself, but for others too. So he never imagined that an opportunity like this would come to support him at this grievous time. Until that morning he was just Jack Batson who was nobody in front of others, but now, he got an opportunity to prove himself worthy in front of others as an adventurer. Then he remembered his dad Ben Batson's words:

“IF YOU HAVE A BURNING DESIRE FOR SOMETHING GOOD, BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS HEARD YOUR PRAYER AND ALREADY FULFILLED IT FOR YOU. THEN, YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOCK AT MANY DOORS FOR OPPORTUNITIES. THE OPPORTUNITIES WILL COME AND KNOCK AT YOUR DOORSTEPS.”

Now he realized that, his dad's words have come true: “DON'T DESPAIR, YOUR GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL COME INTO YOUR LIFE AT THE RIGHT TIME”. Then Jack Batson was nothing for the past 27 years and people used to call him a moron, but now God has chosen to touch his life.

Jack Batson's thoughts were wandering like an unleashed horse around his sweet heart Nova. The fond memories of her blossomed in his heart like wild flowers in the first rain. He knew that, it is the one and only opportunity to prove his worthiness before his relatives by undertaking this adventure and to marry her. If he fails in this battle, he may not get another chance to prove himself. THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY TO FULFIL YOUR DREAM MAY SELDOM COME TWICE IN YOUR LIFE. IF YOU MISS IT, YOU MAY NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE.

Jack Batson decided to say 'Yes', to Father John of the Cross's request. At the same time, his mind was pondering about the strangers who referred his name to Fr. John to investigate this case.

“Father, I am willing to help the Church in this matter. I will gather more information about this issue. Please don't let anybody know that you have shared this matter with me. You may leave your phone number and address with me. I shall contact you over phone, or directly come to the vicarage to meet you after finishing this job. You can contact me in the interim to discuss the developments. I am starting this investigation this very moment. I will do everything possible to retrieve the Holy Grail. I promise, I will find out the Holy Grail, before the new year. You may go now in peace.”

Jack Batson couldn't understand why he gave such a strong promise to Father John. He knew, it was not easy to retrieve such a valuable treasure and fight against the culprits. The only thing he knew clearly was that he needed to retrieve the Holy Grail.

“So, here is the advance cheque for one hundred thousand Hostos. Once the mission is accomplished, I will give you another nine hundred thousand. So, the total reward for this investigation will be one million Hostos. But, if you can't accomplish the duty, I will take back this cheque from you. That means unless you retrieve the Holy Grail the value of this cheque is nothing more than a blank paper.” Father John of the Cross then handed over the cheque to Jack Batson.

NB: The Currency in Billston is CROSTO and HOSTO. 100 Crostos make one Hostos.

For a moment, Jack Batson's mind was confused with mixed feelings whether to accept the cheque or not. He knew that one hundred thousand is a huge sum of money which is enough to make him rich to buy a big mansion and two hectares of lifestyle property in Danger Forest. He realized that the successful investigation and retrieving the Holy Grail was the need of the hour which can turn his current situation upside down. Hitherto he never gave importance to money in his life, but now money has become all the more important to prove his worthiness in the society. This was going to be the first earning he made ever in his life!

“Father I am ready to accept this challenge. I will prove myself that, I am worthy to get a million Hostos reward for my adventure. Thank you, Father, Thank You very much!” Jack Batson said as he accepted the cheque.

“O.K. Then. Good bye Mr. Jack Batson, see you soon!” Father John of the Cross said as he went outside to get into his car.

“Hope to meet you soon. You can expect my call anytime.... Good bye Father”

Father John left and Jack Batson went to the kitchen to make a cup of coffee to drink. Jack realized that it was God's plans to make his dreams a reality. He was waiting for a chance to become an adventurer since his childhood. The stories read by his parents and grandparents motivated him to go into the world of fairy tales and far away islands where no men could make their foot prints. Finally he is getting a chance to fulfil his dream after 24 years. He remembered a quote in a book that he read:

“PEOPLE MAY SAY YOUR DREAMS ARE HARD TO FULFIL, BUT BELIEVE, YOUR FAITH CAN DO MIRACLES... LIKE FAITH CURES SEVERE DISEASES, FAITH HELPS YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS.”

Still he was wondering about that anonymous people who came for his aid that he never knew or met in his life. “Who were they and why have they helped me?” He was thinking about it deeply while he made the coffee.

Suddenly, he heard someone knocking at the door. He went to open the door grumbling as he felt a little bit irritated about the interruption. He was weaving plans in his mind how to accomplish his task....

CHAPTER -3

THE ANONYMOUS GUESTS

As Jack Batson opened the door, he saw a beautiful young lady of around 19 years, carrying a three years old child in her arms, standing in front of him. She was very gorgeous looking and he realized that her beauty and cuteness were incomparable to any other girls or women that he has seen in his life. She was even prettier than his sweetheart Nova and sister Ann. She had blue shining eyes and her dark long hairs touched the floor. She wore a white long gown and covered her head with a golden veil. The child in her arms was waving his hands towards him and smiled.

“Hey beautiful lady, please tell me who you are and what made you come here?” As Jack Batson looked at that lady, he felt a feeling of awe towards her and the child in her arms seemed like an Angel of God just came down from Heaven.

“We are coming from a far, far away place only to meet you Jack!” She replied and smiled.

Her charming smile was attractive and stunned him and he concluded that she should be an Angel, might be his Guardian Angel who appeared disguised as a lady.

“Who are you my dear young lady and how did you know about me?” He asked amazingly.

“I know you very well, even if you don’t know me. I shall tell you later who I am, now I came not to introduce myself, but to say something important.”

“Are you my guardian angel?” He asked to clarify his doubt, as he still felt her as his guardian Angel.

“No, I am not!” She replied.

“Then, are you ghosts? Sorry for insulting both of you, because I can see the halos around the back of your heads and shining auras around your body. So I am sure that both of you are not human beings.”

“No”, I hail from a far, far away place and am entirely different to other womenfolk. This child, I carry in my arms is no one other than my own lovely son.”

“Can you pass your child to me? Let me lull and caress your amazing beautiful son.”

She handed the child and Jack Batson kissed him on both of his cheeks. As he kissed the baby, the child continued his smile. While the baby smiled Jack Batson made a cradle with his own arms and started to lull him.

“Dear lady, please come in and take a seat on that sofa. Then please relax and tell me more about you and why you came here this night time all the way from your far, far away place to meet me?”

The lady accepted his offer, came inside and Jack Batson showed her a sofa to sit. She sat there and Jack Batson gave her the child back and she put him on her lap. Meanwhile, Jack Batson went to the kitchen and made another cup of coffee to give her. He took some chocolates too, to give her child and went back to the sitting room to meet the lady. She was sitting in the same position, but that lovely child was playing on the floor.

Jack Batson offered him some chocolates and handed a packet of chocolates to his mother to give him later. Then he went back to the kitchen and came back carrying some biscuits, coffee cup and a glass of milk in a tray.

“I think, your child might be hungry. So, please give him this milk, and this is for you lovely lady.” Jack Batson said and gave the whole tray to the lady. While Jack Batson watched her, she started to feed her child by giving that glass of milk. The child seemed very hungry and finished the milk in a few gulps, then looked again towards Jack Batson and smiled.

Jack Batson was very happy to see him smiling. He asked him:

“Do you want some more milk?”

“Na!” The child replied.

“I think you are tired, I can carry your baby and you can drink the coffee and eat some biscuits; after that let’s talk!” Jack Batson asked the lady and took her son and started to play with him. The lady finished her coffee and biscuits. Finally both of them sat on the sofa relaxed and continued their conversation.

“Jack Batson, actually, I came here to beg your help. My husband is a famous carpenter and he was working for few months to renovate the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus. He had heard that they were keeping the Holy Grail inside the underground chamber in the monastery. He had a strong desire to see the Holy Grail since his childhood.

One day while he was working there, he found Father Abbot climbing down the steps leading to the underground chamber. My husband stealthily followed him out of his curiosity and entered the chamber after him. He could see Father Abbot opening the glass case where the Holy Grail was kept. Father Abbot didn't realize that my husband was watching him. Then he started nodding his head from left to right and up to down. He chanted some words in a strange language but my husband couldn't understand what he was reciting. His voice turned from chanting to groaning. After that Father Abbot put back the Holy Grail into the glass case, closed it and then turned back.

As he turned back to return to the staircase, he could see my husband standing a few meters behind watching all these deeds done by him. That day when my husband returned home after the work, he told me everything he has witnessed. The next day also he had gone for work, but he didn't return home. The whole night I waited for him, but my waiting was in vain. The very next day I went to the monastery to meet his co-workers to enquire about his disappearance. I understood that on the previous day, he left the monastery just after one hour of work. I was really worried about this and I went to meet Father Abbot to ask him.

When I went to meet him, Father Abbot was looking very sad and I introduced myself to him. I asked him about my husband, he replied me that my husband has stolen the Holy Grail and disappeared to somewhere. When I heard this allegation from him, I became angry and pleaded that my husband is not guilty. I really felt that Father Abbot was trying to make my husband a thief.

Even though I was angry, Father Abbot kept quiet. He heard everything patiently and finally replied:

“My dear daughter, if you disbelieve me, I can show you something.”

Then he invited me to another chamber and I followed him. He turned on a computer and I could see a footage of my husband on the screen. I could see my husband opening the glass case and taking out the Holy Grail sneakily and putting into his backpack. Then he took out a replica of the Holy Grail from his bag and looked around to ensure nobody was watching over him. Then he exchanged the replica nicely into the glass case and quietly climbed up the stairs.

“I am sorry Father, please forgive me! Please, I beg you, don't inform it to the Police!”

“No, my dear child, don't worry, I didn't inform this to the police.”

“Father, does anyone know about this incident other than you?” I asked in despair.

“Yes my child, one more person- Father John of the Cross knows about it. Yet, you don’t need to worry...because he knows only that it has been stolen, but he doesn’t know who has done it. Moreover I requested him not to tell anyone about this episode.”

The lady stopped for a moment and continued:

“I am a strong catholic but my husband is an atheist. Still he is a good person. This is the first time he is doing like this. This incident happened a few days ago, but I never met him thereafter and he didn’t contact me. Could you please investigate where my husband has disappeared? I have nothing to offer you for this help, as Father John did. I beg you, please...I can’t live without my husband. If you get back my husband, God will bless you. Please help me”

Jack Batson was listening quietly what she said to him.

Tears started to roll down her cheeks and Jack Batson felt very sad as it was the first time he is seeing a woman crying in front of him seeking for help.

“Dear lady, please, don’t cry. I promise you, I will do whatever I can to bring back your husband.”

“Thank you, my dear Jack, thank you so much. I will come and meet you again once you find my husband. Thank you for considering my request.”

As she said, she got up from the sofa lifting her baby in her arms, then she went towards the main door to go out. As she reached the main door, she turned back and said:

“My dear Jack Batson, don’t be afraid. I shall pray for you and God will be always with you to help you to tackle your obstacles. You may face many dangers, but trust me, nothing can harm you. Before I leave, I wish to give you a special gift.”

She took something from her pocket, gave it to him and said:

“HOW HARD YOUR PROBLEMS ARE AND HOW DIFFICULT YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS IS, I HAVE A GREAT SOLUTION FOR YOU. WHOEVER YOU ARE AND WHATEVER YOUR PRESENT SITUATION IS, USE THIS MAGICAL WEAPON. IT IS SO SIMPLE. BUT IT HAS EFFICACIOUS POWER EVEN TO STOP WARS AND SHAKE HEAVEN. GOD RULES UNIVERSE; BUT IT RULES GOD. IF YOU USE THIS EVERY DAY, I PROMISE YOU, IT WILL CREATE UNEXPECTED MIRACLES IN YOUR LIFE.

RECITE THIS EVERY DAY, AND KEEP IT WITH YOU ALWAYS; IT WILL BE YOUR GUIDE AND PROTECTOR FROM ALL THE POTENTIAL DANGERS THAT YOU MAY HAVE TO FACE.”

The lady with her child opened the door, got into the car and vanished into the dark.

Jack Batson was still in an amused state of what happened since the nightfall. He couldn't guess why he was becoming a part of these strange happenings, unknowingly.

He forgot to say good bye to them...

As she left, Jack Batson opened his hand to see what she had gifted him. It was a **Rosary** with white and blue glass beads. His face started to shine as he looked at his gift. Then He heard a voice from elsewhere:

“Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Pray for Us.”

Suddenly, his mobile phone rang and he attended the call.

“Hi, Jack, why didn't you call me today?” A female voice asked from the other end. It was Nova Flower, Jack Batson's dearest girl.

“I am sorry my child. I was busy. I want to tell you something. I shall explain everything to you.”

Then Jack Batson narrated every incident to her, since their last meeting until now. She heard everything silently and finally replied:

“Are you sure, you got an appointment?”

“Yes my dear, a cheque for one hundred thousand Hostos from Bank of Billston is lying on the table in front of me. So we must believe.”

“So, don't you think that it is a fake cheque?” She asked doubtfully.

“No, dear child, it is an original cheque and the person came to meet me was the famous preacher Father John of the Cross.”

“Thank God, then you can believe it; now listen! Do you remember what I told you? Jesus listened my prayers. WHOEVER TRUST IN GOD SHALL NOT BE PERISHED.” Nova said pleasantly.

“So, are you happy now?” Jack Batson asked.

“I will be happy only after you marry me and once I am your wife! So, what is your next step?”

Nova was curious to know his plans.

“To be frank with you, I don’t know. As dad always say, now success knocked at my door, yet I don’t know what to do next!”

“Don’t worry Jack, I shall pray. If God has done this for you, he will give directions also to fulfil your dream. So, PRAY, HOPE AND DON’T WORRY, like Saint Padre Pio said.”

“Thank you my dear child, all these miracles happened in my life because of mom’s and your fervent prayers...Are you busy now?”

“Yes, anything important?”

“Yes, I want to say something more!”

“What is that?” She was anxious.

“I love you Nova, I love you so much.”

“... I already know that Jack! I will wait for you. Come back as a successful man to marry me.”

“I promise Nova, that is going to happen soon!”

“I will wait for you dear.”

“Sweet dreams dear! Call you tomorrow!”

“Bye!”

CHAPTER- 4

JACK BATSON DISCUSSES WITH HIS FAMILY

Jack Batson's and Nova's family came back after their picnic. Everyone was happy after the trip. All the members of Batson family gathered around the dining table for their dinner and Jack shared his previous days' experience with his family.

"Can you show me the cheque, then I can decide if it is fake or not!" Ben Batson said.

Jack took the cheque from his wallet and handed to his dad. He thoroughly scrutinised it both sides and said:

"Give me a minute and I can determine the validity of this cheque!"

Then his dad took mobile phone from his pocket and opened an app named 'Fake Currency'. He put the cheque under the mobile camera and analysed it with the app. Then he turned back to Jack Batson. Jack was wondering what is going to happen. Jack was sure that he met the real Father John of the Cross, but was the cheque real too? A ray of doubt went through Jack's mind about the authenticity of the cheque.

Why should such a famous priest offer a huge amount of money for him? Until today, he was just an average person with no track of record of solving mysteries. He had no great knowledge or qualification to attract people. Then how could he be paid such an enormous amount of money from a famous person, to carry out such a rather impossible mission, when there are better and smarter options? Even the Police was ready to do anything for Father John of the Cross, as he was a celebrity in Billston.

While Jack's mind was trying to unravel the mystery behind the disappearance of the Holy Grail and why Father John approached him to loosen this knot, he heard a voice in his ears:

"PEOPLE MAY CALL YOU USELESS BUT JESUS NEEDS YOU...YOU ARE HIS MOST VALUABLE TREASURE."

He was perplexed to hear such a voice and looked around to see where it came from. He couldn't trace the direction of the voice and he looked at everyone. He understood that only he could hear that voice, as no one else had any change even in their facial expression.

"Jack", it is a genuine cheque, so you can trust that. Yet, we don't understand, why...why such a famous person came to our home to ask your help? Why? We know that you are not a famous

person and you are not trained to investigate such a robbery case; then how come?" Ben Batson asked. This time it was not Jack but his mother who has answered:

"I believe that, it is the intercession of Holy Family and Saint Michael the Archangel who interceded in his needs; otherwise even if somebody recommended his name, I don't think Father John of the Cross will be willing to give this case investigation to Jack. So, let's thank Holy Family and Saint Michael."

Then Jack looked at his grandpa's face to know his response.

"My dear child, now God heard your prayers, and gave you a good opportunity. So proceed. You know how many people cursed you and blamed you. Now, Jesus gave you a chance to be more successful than they are. But, ALWAYS REMEMBER, WHEREVER YOU ARE AND WHATEVER YOU ARE, NEVER ALLOW PRIDE AND GREED TO CONQUER YOUR HEART. ALWAYS BE HUMBLE, BECAUSE ONLY IN HUMBLE PEOPLE'S HEART, GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT RESIDE. He chose only poor fishermen and ordinary people to become his disciples. He never chose any pride King or Queen. So be humble always; then God will help you to attain higher positions and one day you will become the world-famous adventurer Jack Batson." His grandpa Gringer Batson advised him.

"Jack, I will pray for you and you shouldn't need to worry about anything. It is the right opportunity as grandpa told you. Believe in God and He will help you to fulfil your dreams." Grandma Barbara advised Jack by caressing his head.

Then Jack Batson looked at his siblings to know their opinion. They just smiled and said together.

"We are very proud of you Jack. Now you got a lotto, don't lose it, keep it always with you. Many people say that you wasted your many years without doing anything; even then we can say that it is not too late. God will help you and we want to see the same people who grumbled against you praising you in the near future."

"Thank you all for your advices and prayers. I know, I wasted many years without doing anything. I still have hope and this is the right time to begin. I remember a quote in a book that really shook me. The book says, NEVER LOSE YOUR HOPE, YOU ARE NOT TOO LATE, IT IS THE RIGHT TIME TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS. So, I will start right now." Jack Batson said and he realized that his mind is becoming stronger every moment.

He was visualising with his inner eyes, what would happen in the near future...

The people cursed him would have to swallow their words and start praising him soon. He always wanted to become famous one day. That was his dream. He wished to become a renowned adventurer and he wanted the people to come to meet him from faraway places. He could see with his inner eyes an ocean of his fans crowded in front of his gate to have a glimpse of him. He waving his hands towards them and they waving back.

“O.K. Then, let’s go to bed. Don’t forget to wake up early. Tomorrow is the Christmas eve and we have many chores to complete before the Christmas celebration.” Gringer Batson reminded all his family as he got up from the chair to wash his hands after the dinner.

After their heavy meal everyone went to bed. Jack didn’t know when the Goddess of sleep embraced him!

CHAPTER 5

SANTA'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT

It was December 26th and one of the coldest days in the winter season. The golden sun rays spread in the sky and peeped down through the white thick clouds into earth as though it was lighting up the world with fire. Jack Batson and his brother Matt were sleeping peacefully in Batson Palace which is located in Danger Forest. The clock struck at 8'O clock in the morning, yet they didn't wake up from the bed.

They were very tired after their last night's adventures, that caused them to go to bed very late. The previous day they had Christmas celebrations throughout the country.

Jack and his brother Matt attended Christmas carol disguised themselves as Santa Clauses. You may be amazed to know that the real Santa Claus who is also known as Saint Nicolas, was also present for the Christmas celebrations as their chief Guest in St. Mary's Church, Danger Forest. The chief guest for the New Year celebrations in their country will be His Holiness Pope Francis. His Holiness has agreed to spend one week in Billston between January 1st and 7th.

This year's Christmas was very special to Jack and Matt. A few days back on 20th December, their Dad Ben Batson gifted them a flying car which was his own creation that he named "Angelus Wings". Now they can travel anywhere in the world wherever they wish, without any interruption from traffic jam or any other hindrances. The notable attraction of this car was its fuel which was just water and air. This cute scientific marvel is totally fuel efficient, eco-friendly without causing any pollution and pretty cost effective.

The lovely siblings Jack, Matt and Ann rode this car, the very first day they received it. This amazing car has a very powerful engine with an acceleration from 0 to 500 KMs within 10 seconds. They took Angelus Wings to participate in the Christmas Carol celebrations and later midnight Holy Mass in the Church.

Even though the Church celebrated Christmas day with wonderful festivities, they planned to make even merrier celebrations in the New Year to give honour to their celebrity chief guest. In the fabulous Holy Christmas night, Jack Batson performed different types of fascinating circus tricks to cheer up the parishioners. He used his Flying Jet Jacket (also invented by his dad Ben Batson) to fly to the top of the tall flag post which was 300 metres tall from the ground level. This post is used to hoist 'the Flag of Faith' (this flag depicts a dove that comes upon a

cross planted on the world globe) on the occasions of the Church festivals. Then he jumped downwards from the top of the flag post like an expert gymnast and reached safely on the ground.

And there was another trick played by Jack in which his younger brother Matt also participated as Santa. They had a very lean thread made of Nano fibres (again invented by Ben Batson), which was as thin as a small cotton thread used by a tailor. Yet, it was a strong thread capable of pulling back an elephant. They tied up one end on a big pine tree and other end around a silver oak which was hundred metres away. Then, these two Santa blocked their visions with black cotton clothes and walked on this narrow rope, above 300 metres from the ground level.

Everyone was amazed witnessing these tricks and the people started applauding like monsoon thunder. Bewilderment of the people increased when they realized that these gymnasts were just walking on the rope, without using even a pole to balance their body. Normally even experts would use some protective gear, when they walked in such unimaginable heights. At the peak of this adventure they started dancing upon the rope by singing the famous Christmas hymns ‘Silent Night, Holy Night’; ‘Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells’, as if they were attending a procession during Christmas Carol.

While traversing through this small thread, they had to eat the whole Christmas cupcakes, which were being hovered around them like a kit of pigeons. As the reward for these life-threatening adventures, they received an invitation from Santa Claus to visit his dwelling place in North Pole. They would be going to stay with Santa for a month to help him to pack the Christmas gifts for the children in the coming year.

After the Christmas celebrations, Batson family invited Santa Claus to their home to give him a special treat. Initially Santa denied the offer because he was in a hurry, yet finally he agreed to stay with them for a day. So, after the Holy Mass at the Church, Santa approached the reindeers and muttered some words in their ears.

Then he waved his hands towards Batson family as an invitation to accompany him in the sledge. They happily accepted the trip with Santa in the sledge.

Santa then raised his whip and gave a slight slash on the back of the reindeers. It was a very soft whip like a feather. The reindeers rose up into the sky by pulling up the sledge behind them and started to glide as though they had wings. They flew among the dark rainy clouds as well as on the white puffy soft clouds, as if they were skating on the smooth solid ice.

Jack Batson's Angelus Wings had a remote-control system, so, it followed them behind the sledge. When they reached above the landing zone of the Batson family's private airport (located at the back of their Batson family bungalow), the sledge jerked and stopped as though, it was going to drop downwards. Finally, at a low speed, they landed onto the airstrip and everybody alighted from the sledge along with their special guest Santa Claus.

Santa Claus' eyes strode to every direction, going through the beauty of the bungalow in its nook and corners. His eyes were gleaming and he was enjoying a very special Christmas reward gifted to him by God for his endless endeavours and hardships to meet His people. He was startled by the beauty of the bungalow, enhanced by the silvery moonlight shone upon it. That time the image of the bungalow reflected in the pond that may trick people that, a silver bungalow was hiding under the water. And they had a special dancing fountain in the middle of the pond that jet water onto all directions according to the rhythm of the music. The broad garden around the palace, the river and waterfall behind it and the mountain beyond that also attracted him.

"It is so beautiful and mesmerising!" He murmured with surprise.

"Really.... do you really like it Santa?" Jack's grandpa Gringer Batson asked him.

"Well, everything is very beautiful, how old is this palace?" Santa Claus asked him in astonishment.

"This palace is six hundred years old, but nobody would believe that; even you may find it hard to believe it." He answered while they walked towards the main door.

When everyone reached in front of the main door, it greeted them: "Hi, my dear family welcome back; a special welcome to our dear Santa Claus, our special guest, hearty welcome to all of you."

When the door gave him such a hearty welcome, Santa Claus smiled and gave back his blessings:

"My dear brother, the Main Door, you are one of the close family members of Batson family and your relationship with this family started more than six hundred years ago. You have protected this house and its people like a soldier that protects his mother land from all its enemies and invaders. I bless you that, you may continue to exist with these people for generations to come until the end of the world."

"Thank you, dear Santa. Thank you for your blessings!"

“What else can I say; Awesome and beautiful! Dear ones, I can see only amazing things at your home and surroundings!” Santa Claus spoke happily while he rubbed both hands. They all entered through the main door and it closed itself behind.

“Now, look at the sun...it is rising slowly into the sky and the clock would strike five within a few minutes. Dear Santa Claus, let’s have breakfast together in the morning at 8:30, I beg you to take rest until then or as long as you wish. I know, you are very tired, and you need rest. So, please go with Jack and Matt to our special guest room. They will take you to that room. Jack, ask Matilda and Amanda (house servants) to prepare bed for him. Let’s all go to bed. Please be ready before 8:30 to enjoy the special banquet that we would prepare to honour our special guest.” Ben Batson said.

Thus, everyone assembled in the living room dispersed. Santa went upstairs to the second floor with Jack and his brother Matt to take rest for a few hours after his long journey all over the world that he started since the Christmas eve.

“Dear Santa!” Jack Batson called while they climbed up the steps.

“What my dear child?” Santa asked looking into his eyes.

“May I ask you one doubt?” He whispered.

“Yea, dear child, ask me. But, no need to ask the question, because, I already know what you are going to ask me. Your question is, how I became Santa Claus and until then who I was? Then why I chose such a hard job of travelling around the world and finally when I would stop this journey? Also you wanted to know when do I begin and finish this journey every year during the Christmas season? Aren’t these your doubts?” Santa asked quietly looking into Jack Batson’s perplexed eyes.

“Yes, dear Santa; but how did you read my mind? Do you possess the sixth sense to see through people’s mind and read their hearts? My dad, mom, grandpa and grandma had told me, many...many...miraculous things about you. But, when I heard all those stories, really, I thought those are all just stories made out of human imagination, but now I realize it is true. I read many stories about you. I have watched documentaries and movies about you wherein you are depicted as a fairy-tale character. But this is my first time I come across with the real Santa in life. I have seen many people who disguise themselves as Santa Claus in the Christmas season, but I knew that the real Santa Claus would be someone entirely different to them. And now I know you are more enchanting than them.”

“It is true my dear child...it is true..., what you think is absolutely right. Only a few people in the world got the chance to meet me. They knew who I am. Rest of the people have different notions about me. But, NO BELIEF IS RIGHT OR WRONG, EACH ONE HAS ITS OWN RIGHT AND WRONG. I shall clarify all your doubts later.”

Santa Claus caressed his white beard like a dad caressing his own child who reposes peacefully upon his chest. Continuing their conversation, they passed the first floor and climbed up stairs and reached the bedroom the servants prepared for Santa.

“Santa you look very old, so are you not tired to climb up all these steps swiftly?” Matt raised his doubt.

“No, my dear child. Yes, it is true that I am very much older than you think, yet, I am never tired of any work since I was born and I will continue this mission which I chose myself out of my love towards our Lord Jesus Christ and His people. In my earthly life when I became an adult, I took a decision that I wouldn’t waste my time even a second. So, if I had to do a job for the next day, I completed that task on the previous day itself. Thus, I did all my duties before time. It is not my bodily strength that helped me to work hard and fulfil my duties, but Lord Jesus Christ’s blessings which strengthens me to keep me steady to finish off my tasks. So, if you challenge me to climb the top of the ‘Mount of the Lord’ within a day without any aides or help, I will do it.”

(‘Mount of the Lord’ is the tallest Mountain on earth, 100 times taller than Mount Everest and it is located in Billston. Every year on the Easter day, Holy Trinity would appear with Holy Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, all Holy Angels, all Saints and all the Holy Souls in Purgatory in the valley of this mount, at three in the afternoon. And this apparition lasts until quarter past three. The people in Billston assemble in the valley and celebrate this as a feast which is the most famous celebration in the country known as ‘Heaven Apparition Feast’.)

They entered the guest room that was prepared for Santa Claus. Santa went to the bathroom to have a shower. After washing he came out wearing a red pyjama, t-shirt and a red cap. His slippers also were red in colour.

“Dear children, please go and change your clothes and come back if you are not tired. Then I shall give answer for all those questions that you asked me.” Santa Claus said while he sat upon a polished wooden chair.

Jack and Matt went back to their rooms and changed their clothes hurriedly. They were thinking about their distinguished guest at their home. They had heard many strange mysterious

stories about Santa since their childhood, yet never got a chance to acquaint with him personally. So they also believed that he is just an imaginary character.

When they returned to the guest room, Santa was sitting on a chair, his eyes half closed, chanting a rosary and whispering ‘Our Father in Heaven’ and ‘Hail Mary’.

“Do you pray Rosary every day?” Jack and Matt asked together as they were seeing something unusual.

“Yes, my dear children... I celebrate Holy Mass and pray Rosary every day by meditating on its 20 mysteries.”

“Are you a priest to celebrate the Holy Mass?” Jack was curious.

“Yes, I was a priest, I am priest and I will be a priest.” He murmured.

“Then, why people call you simply Santa Claus instead of Fr. Santa Claus?”

“Really...do you think so...?” Santa Claus asked Jack as though he heard something novel.

“Certainly, I also had the same doubt...” Matt stammered.

“O.K. dear children; I can clear your doubts. Before that, I have brought two special gifts to give you dear Matt.” Santa Claus smiled and took a red bag from under the cot.

He took out two packets from his bag, one wrapped in golden coloured foil and other one in silver colour. Then with a smile he handed over the gifts to Matt and said:

“Please open and see the wonderful gifts I brought for you from Santa Claus village.”

With great amusement, he received the gifts and his hands started to shiver as though those presents were wrapped in ice cold wraps. As soon as he received the gifts, he opened the cover swiftly and placed it on the bed. The gift in the silver coloured wrap was a clock and the one in the golden coloured wrap was a pair of shoes.

“A clock and pair of shoes!” Jack Batson was delighted.

“Thank you, dear Santa.” Matt thanked Santa and shook his hands. Santa grabbed Matt’s both hands, held it between his hands and rubbed it softly. Then he advised Matt to look into his palms.

When Matt opened his hands, he could see a scene like in a television screen. He could see himself as walking along the road with trees on both sides, and carrying the clock presented by Santa. Then one of his friends named Arthur was coming from the opposite direction and asked him why he carries that clock. He answered that, it is a gift from Santa Claus on his Christmas’

visit to his house. Then Arthur argued with him saying that he is a liar and that clock was not Santa's gift. Arthur went on saying that the clock belonged to him which he got from his uncle, who lives in Waterfield. Arthur also blamed that Matt stole it from his house during his visit on the previous day. Then Arthur insisted to handover the clock back. But, Matt denied it and challenged him to prove it himself. He also promised that if Arthur could prove it, then he is willing to handover it to him. Suddenly, a yell came out from the clock:

"You little thief, how dare you to snatch me away from Matt's hand. I am not yours, I belong to Matt and has been gifted to him by Santa Claus during his Christmas visit. You little robber Arthur, how dare you to put your hands in your father's pocket and think that nobody was watching you. I know that you were on the way to the market to buy a new hat with the stolen money that you stole. Don't you feel ashamed of your guilt? I warn you, if you continue these bad habits, one day the people will stone you to death. I order you to go home, give the money back and say sorry to your parents for your misdeed."

When these startling words came out from the clock, both got shocked and Matt could see Arthur closing his both ears with his hands. A horrifying demonic possession appeared on his face and his eyes bulged out. Immediately Arthur turned back and ran homewards as though he was horrified by the curse of a ghost. Matt was perplexed when he saw this scene and tried to offer a smile to Santa. Santa smiled back and took Matt's hands again. Santa again did the same thing with Matt's hands. He held Matt's hands between his own hands and rubbed it together as he did it before.

"Look again!" Santa pointed to Matt's hands and he could see another vision.

"Matt was walking on a sea shore enjoying the beauty of the beach. He could see the ships and yachts anchored in the harbour. Suddenly, a hurricane appeared in the sky, dashed towards the sea at tremendous speed resulting the tides to dance and rise above the ships. The gigantic tides started to sink and swallow all the ships and yachts that had moored in the port. Matt didn't heed any attention towards these disasters and walked jollily towards the sea as though he was mad. He had worn the pair of shoes gifted by Santa Claus. Some coastal guards noticed it and tried to dissuade him from that crazy walk towards that turbulent ocean which would swallow him at any time into the bowels of it. Then a miracle happened. He started to walk upon the water like he was walking on the firm ground. He walked further for a few minutes, turned around and walked backwards. Thus finally, he reached back safely at the shore."

That scene also vanished from his hands. Then, Matt raised his head and gave a pleasant smile at Santa. Santa's glistening eyes seemed like two stars in the sky.

"Thank you, dear Santa. Now, I understand fully how to use these special gifts. If somebody tells lie in front of this clock, it would yell out that the person was lying. And with these pair of shoes, I can walk upon the water like we walk on the ground. Thanks again for these miraculous gifts."

"It's OK.... these are not miraculous gifts..." Santa stopped for a moment and continued:

"NEITHER MACHINES, WEAPONS NOR ANY OTHER HUMAN INVENTIONS ARE SUPERIOR TO GOD'S OWN CREATIONS. AMONG HIS CREATIONS, THE BEST ARE HUMAN BEINGS, WHOM HE MADE IN HIS OWN IMAGE AND GAVE THE PERMISSION TO CALL HIM FATHER. IF HUMAN BEINGS ARE GOD'S BEST CREATIONS, HOLY MARY IS THE MASTERPIECE. I am not just praising God. Even if you compare the most efficient computer with a human being, you can see the difference. Never a computer can defeat a human being's capacity, either by its memory or calculation or by its competency. The reason we all know, men are created by God, but computer is created by men."

"Certainly, you are right dear Santa!" Jack agreed with his opinion. Santa's lovely white beard seemed like snowflakes and it shined while the electric lights reflected upon it. Jack and Matt were thinking for a moment and Jack suddenly asked:

"Dear Santa, why didn't you bring any gifts for me? Do you think that, I am not good enough to accept even a small gift from you?" Jack pretended like jealous of Matt.

"No, dear child, I have a special gift for you. But, promise me.... you will use it only for the benefits of others. You know, until now, whatever I gave others are only for the benefits of themselves, but for you it is an entirely different gift. You should use it only for the benefit of others. So promise me dear child."

"Yes, dear Santa, I assure you from the bottom of my heart that I would stick onto your words."

CHAPTER- 6

THE LETTER FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

“Dear child, it is not me who is going to give you the most valuable Christmas present. I can give you both my Christmas blessings. I have something to say. I came all the way from my village as your guest, just for one reason; to make you prepare to face new challenges. Now onwards you are going to see, feel and experience miracles in your life. The people cursed you will be going to praise you and the people supported you will be going to thank God for his mercy showered on you. Dear Jack, I have a letter for you written by Angelical Father, Saint Francis of Assisi. I can assure you that, you are going to be the part of a great event, which you would never ever have dreamed of in your life.”

While they discussed all these, they could hear a sweet song as being sung by a choir group outside. Everyone sharpened their ears to hear it more clearly. Suddenly the song raised to high pitch. Everybody rushed towards the window and opened it to see the singers. Beside the Batson bungalow, in the mid-air just above the tall apple tree, they could see some luminous figures hovering in the air and it eventually started to encircle the house floating in the air. The figures looked like human beings wearing white linen luminous robes as in the fairy tale story books and movies.

"Wow! Who are they? Are they fairy tale creatures or goblins?" Jack and Matt yelled with amazement.

“Dear children, watch them carefully to know who they are! Can't you identify them with their sweet voice? Just listen carefully to their beautiful song and also to the words they are singing.”

When Santa advised them this, Jack and Matt raised their head and pressed their ears to the windows as though they were eavesdropping to the discussion of some beastly gangsters. They heard a song:

"Holy God, born on earth

Jesus Christ as little child

Look at His gleaming eyes

Watch over His Lovely Face

Let's sing alleluia

Let's sing alleluia

Look God's children

Come to Bethlehem

Praise Your God, Christ the King

Bow Before Him as Little Lambs

He is Your Real Shepherd

He is your only Saviour

Let's sing alleluia

Let's sing alleluia"

"Oh, my God...Holy Angels of God from Heaven!" Jack Batson whispered to Matt, who also became perplexed to see the Angels from Heaven.

"Yes, my dear children, they are the Angels of God!" Santa Claus said.

"But, we don't see any wings at their back?" Matt asked him doubtfully.

"Dear child, the wings of the Angel are just an imagination of the writers and artists to make the men understand about their supernatural powers. Do you know another thing; the Holy Angels from Heaven are categorised into nine different groups."

"Which are they?" Jack Batson was curious to know more about it.

"The Nine Choirs of Angels from higher to lower hierarchy are: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Archangels, Principalities and Guardian Angels."

" Can we meet all of them?"

" Certainly, dear children.... certainly... not just for this moment only. Dear Jack, from today on you will be visited by many Angels, Saints and the Holy souls in Purgatory. Besides, you will have some horrible apparitions of the souls from Hell. Even Satan and his devils may visit

you to hunt you down. But, don't be afraid my child. Holy Trinity One God, Holy Mary, Saint Joseph, all Holy Angels, all Saints and all the holy souls in purgatory will come to your aid and Protection."

"Dear Santa what are you talking about? How would it happen? May I tell you the truth that, I didn't understand anything? I know that God exists, even though the stupid atheists say that He doesn't. The apparition of Holy Mary, Saint Joseph, Saint Michael, other Saints and Angels are real. I understand that Satan and his messengers are prowling about the world to destroy God's own people. Yet, I can't understand what you mean by, *I am going to be haunted by devils.*"

Jack Batson spluttered and his voice was quivering and fainted, as though he was a little bit perturbed to know such strange and unusual things. He looked at Santa's face and realized that Santa was observing him carefully.

"Dear child, did I say so? No...no.... never... that is not right. Satan and his evil spirits can't come into someone's life, unless they let them in. If you are a child of God, Satan will never be able to come closer to you. Now, leave that matter to God...let me read this letter for you."

"I am surprised, how come Saint Francis of Assisi know me?" Jack Batson stunned.

"It is only because your name has been written in the *Book of Life* by God." Santa replied.

"Dear Santa, are you sure that my name is written in the Book of Life."

"Certainly, dear child. The name of all the people those who have trust in God is written in the Book of Life, including saints and sinners. God writes the name of each and every person in the Book of Life when He creates them. But God give them the freedom to act on their own wish. People either due to their ignorance or the attraction towards the worldly pleasures fall into sins by forgetting the love of God, the Father. Many people never try to repent of their sins. Thus, after their death, they fail to stand in front of God's Holy presence. Take the case of our very first ancestors- Adam and Eve. When the ancient serpent Satan tricked them, they fell into his plans and committed sin against God. When God came to Eden to visit them, they hid among the bushes, not because they understood that they were naked, but because they knew the holiness of God. And they realised that the shadow of impurity had covered them due to their disobedience to God."

Santa stopped for a moment and looked at Jack and Matt. They were listening to his narration eagerly like two astrologers who are studying the position of the stars, to predict a disaster going to happen in their country.

"Dear children" He continued in the same sweet voice and pitch: "I hope you might have heard that God always punishes the sinners and pull them down into hell. Do you think so?"

"I don't think so. Our God loves everyone, he is not a punishing judge!" Matt replied.

"You are right Matt... you are right... GOD HATES SINS, BUT DOES LOVE THE SINNERS. God loves the sinners, as much as he loves the Saints. Have you read the parable of 'the Good Shepherd' who went after his lost lamb and also the parable of 'the Prodigal Son'? Even though the son had sinned, the Father welcomed him back happily with his whole heart? OUR GOD IS LOVE. HE IS OUR LOVING FATHER AND MERCIFUL MOTHER. YOUR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, LIFE PARTNERS, SIBLINGS AND CHILDREN MAY ABANDON YOU, BUT, ONLY ONE PERSON WILL STAND WITH YOU FIRMLY FOREVER, THAT IS GOD. So, it is not God who pulls down the sinners into Hell. After the death... the sinners who didn't repent of their sins in their life understand that, their impurity was caused by their own sins. Such men are afraid to stand in the presence of God. So, they curse themselves and jump into Hell."

Santa took out an old parchment from his pocket and spread it upon a table to help them to read. Jack and Matt looked through it carefully. They could see something written on it, in Latin. Some ink drops had spread hither and thither as if it was written with a feather pen, but the handwriting was very clear to read.

The letter was as follows:

"To dear Jack Batson and Matt Batson,

Greetings and special blessings to you, my dear children, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were searching for many years, to find out the most suitable person to be appointed as the leader of 'the Congregation of Laymen Exorcists', to fight against Satan and his devils and to preach the Gospel of our Lord. As you know, we need more congregations among us to proclaim the faith. Besides, the necessity to preach the Gospel by the laymen is also very important.

As you know, every one of us has the vocation to spread the Gospel of Love among our brethren, but only a few has come forward to venture into such a risky journey. If you dare to come forward, your duty will be to help the priest exorcists on their journey to hunt the haunted

places and to destroy the evil spirits. As we all know God shows no partiality among his children. God shows His abundant blessings and showers His graces upon His children, without considering, whether he is a Christian, or any other religious believer or an atheist or anyone else. For God, all of us are His children and He is our loving Father and merciful Mother.

The main intention of me to write this secret letter to you is, to request you to find out the stolen Holy Grail, used by Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the very first occasion He became the Holy Eucharist with an intention to be with us forever, till the end of the World. The mystery of the Holy Eucharist is unexplainable and, when we try to understand it is like, counting or measuring the drops of water in the ocean with a small sea shell.

Since the beginning of the 13th century, the Holy Grail has been kept in 'the Monastery of Holy Face of Jesus' which is located in the valley of the mountain range of Eccaberre, in the village Eccopodochia. Please help my poor brethren at the Monastery of Eccopodochia, to recover the Holy Grail. If you can be successful in this task, I promise you, I will give you a special present, like the King in our Lord's gospel gave 10 kingdoms to the righteous servant. You may face many obstacles during the exploration, but never get dejected. Don't be afraid, God is always with you. When you face problems on your way, you can be assure that, you are approaching your victory. The problems in the life are necessary for you to become stronger. When pains increase, do remember, nobody in the world could become successful without hardships and pains. But, always be happy in our God's name, because our Father can give you from his immense wealth. Never despair my child, never despair. THESE PROBLEMS AND PAINS YOU FACE ARE THE VERY FIRST STEPS OF YOUR LADDER TOWARDS HEAVENLY LIFE. NO PERSON EVER LIVED AND DIED IN THE WORLD WITHOUT HARDSHIPS.

IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL SEE MIRACLES IN YOUR LIFE. Be patient, don't be afraid to fight against the evil and reach your goal. My dear children, I give you my blessings. Your humble brother, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Francis of Assisi"

Santa finished reading the letter and gave it to Jack. Matt and Jack glanced over it again. The words disappeared from the letter and the next moment they could see the image of St. Francis of Assisi appearing on it. HE waved his hands and blessed them with a sign of Cross

with a beautiful smile on his face. As a thanksgiving for his blessings Jack and Matt waved back their hands and bowed their head.

Saint Francis was in his habit made of sack clothes, that they have seen in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. It was torn and rugged, yet it was glowing like a lighted lamp.

"Dear children..." The image started to speak.

"Wow, Saint Francis speaking!" Jack and Matt jumped with great amazement.

"Why can't you give us an apparition, like Santa Claus did now?" Jack insisted the saint to appear in front of them.

"Because, it is not necessary right now and it has been forbidden by our Lord Jesus Christ. I can only appear when it is permitted by the Lord. He doesn't allow an apparition at an inappropriate time."

Jack took a stern look at Santa. He was smiling while listening to all these conversations. He raised his lips to say something but swallowed the words. He rubbed his cold hands together and his face gleamed in the light as always.

As Jack looked onto his face, he remembered Santa Claus' history that he learned from his catechism class. As we all know the real name of Santa Claus is Saint Nicolas, who was a dedicated Catholic priest, sacrificed his life for the poor people and died when he was 73. After his worldly life, he went to Heaven and became fortunate to sit on the lap of God, the Father Almighty, for his good deeds and sufferings.

When we closely watch a picture of Santa Claus, we can see his face always shining like a full moon and his eyes glistening like two stars in the sky. But there is a past history of pains, sufferings and sacrifices, which people are seldom aware of. Nobody would believe that it was the same Santa Claus, who travels on the sledge, pulled by reindeers throughout the world. EVERY HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL MAN MAY HAVE A MISERABLE PAST OF TEARS, PAINS, SACRIFICES AND SUFFERINGS TO SHARE.

While they continued these conversations in the guest room, still it was too dark outside and the rest of the family members were in deep sleep.

"Can you please light up a candle and give it to me, then switch off the light." Santa requested.

"Yes, Santa." Matt answered and rushed to grab a candle from the chest of drawers in his room.

"Look at the sky!" While Matt went to his room, Santa pointed towards the sky and said to Jack.

“What do you see there?” Santa asked Jack.

“The twinkling stars in the sky.” Jack replied.

“True... Did you know, many people believe that they go to the sky and become a star after their death! What do you think? Do you believe that those stars are our ancestors turned to stars?”

“Never Santa, never. I don’t believe it. But what is your opinion? Is it true?” Jack Batson asked to know his version.

“No dear child, no. Each person has their own soul. After their death, based on the good deeds done in this worldly life, their souls go to either Heaven, Purgatory or Hell.”

He sighed for a moment and continued: “Heaven is not just a place for Saints and Angels in the presence of God. The concept of Heaven is not just a place; it is the state of the soul where there is complete happiness with God.”

“Can you imagine, you stay alone without your parents in a dark fort in the middle of a forest? You see many devils, hearing blasphemies and curses against God. Besides you live in total darkness where there is no happiness. No people there to love you. You feel hatred towards the other people, and other people also feel hatred towards you. A horrific fire from which no light emits out, tortures you- from your inside to outside, and from your head to toe. The Satan, devils and other souls come to you, not for consoling, but to beat you up, torture you and make you suffer. You don’t like to see the sun rise and the dawn; you hate to see the shining moon and the glistening stars. In that state, you will be totally unhappy and hate others, hate the friendship, hate to love and to be loved. In such terrible situation, you realize that you are doomed; so you strongly wish others also to be doomed. Can you imagine such a state and such a place? That is Hell.”

“Oh, Santa, I understand it fully.” Jack said, as though he got a fair idea of Hell through his simple narration.

“Then what about Heaven?” Jack was more curious.

“Heaven is a place where you are in complete happiness in the presence of God. Imagine a life where you have no pain and fear of death in your life. A place where you don’t need to face any troubles, where you have complete freedom and happiness. That is the place where you know that you are totally safe from every dangers and snares of the evil spirits. It is like you stay with your parents and see that everything around you are great and beautiful. Then you

would think everybody is being considered as equal without caring of their religion, colour, wealth, education etc. Everyone is equal in Heaven. Heaven is such a great state of the soul. You will be always with your parents and see God directly as you see your parents and your siblings. In Heaven you know that God loves you more than everything in the universe, even than His life, and you love Him back more than all the fellow human beings, all the worldly pleasures and everything in the universe. Such a beautiful unexplainable state of the soul after death is known as Heaven.”

Jack was thinking deeply about what Santa had told him. It seemed like Santa has refuted his earlier notion about Heaven. While thinking about this Santa continued his conversation:

“My dear Child, Heaven is a truth when we are in the presence of God. Also Heaven is a great lie without the presence of God. IF YOU FEEL HAPPINESS AND TOTAL SATISFACTION WHEN YOU LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND TREAT THE PEOPLE WHO HATES YOU AS YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THEN YOUR HEART IS A HEAVEN. JESUS WITH ALL HIS SAINTS AND ANGELS WILL LIVE IN SUCH A HEART. THEN YOU DON’T NEED TO DIE TO GET HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE. WHEN YOU ARE IN SUCH A STATE THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.”

While they were continuing their conversation Saint Francis was heeding carefully like a nursery school child listening to his teacher. His face was shining like an Angel and he raised his hand. At the same time, Jack moved his hand and touched the moving image, and he really felt as though he was touching a human figure.

“Dear brother Francis, I have heard many things about you. You are really a miracle worker and saint. Even a terrible wolf became a humble lamb in front of you and you kindly called him brother Wolf. I heard this story and many other stories about you. You were raised to sky and levitated in the air out of your purity which is compatible with God’s Holy Angels. When I heard all these miracles, I wished to become a saint like you. It was not to become famous like you; but to serve the same Lord Jesus Christ you served. I had tried hard, but failed!”

“My dear child, I am not a saint, I am the worst sinner ever lived in the world. The miracles, what you think as being performed by me, was performed by Our Lord and God Jesus Christ. I am a worm like every human being. It was His Holy Spirit who helped me to perform all these miracles. If you want to become a saint, pray to God and He will help you. If you possess wealth in this world and don’t deposit treasure in Heaven, it can’t help you after your death. So, keep your whole treasures in Heaven where the thieves never dare to come to steal it.

Remember, you can see many people perform miracles in this world. Never consider all of them as saints. You should be aware that some of those tricks are performed by Satan, as he was an Archangel once. We can discern the saints from the wizards because Saints will be humble but wizards and witches won't. When Jesus bless you with His Holy Spirit, you are capable to perform miracles, not for your fame or for your personal profit, but for the honour of Jesus. IF YOU WANT TO BECOME A SAINT, PRAYING A LOT IS NOT ENOUGH TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL. YOU MUST BE HUMBLE AND WILLING TO SUFFER A LOT WITHOUT ANY COMPLAINTS. IF YOU DO GOOD THINGS FOR OTHERS AND THEY TORTURE YOU, REMEMBER, YOU ARE GOD'S FAVOURITE CHILD. SUFFER ALL THOSE PAINS PATIENTLY AND GIVE EVERYTHING TO GOD YOUR FATHER. THEN GOD WILL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO RAISE YOU UP, AND MAKE YOU THE RULER OF ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO CURSED AND TORTURED YOU. WHEN GOD ELEVATES YOU TO HEIGHTS DO REMEMBER TO KILL THE PRIDE FROM YOUR LIFE."

"How can I kill my pride; can you help me?"

"No, it is not me, but your best friend in the world will help you!" Saint Francis of Assisi answered without hesitation.

"My best friend, who, Arthur? how can he help me? He is just a youth of 26 years like me! How can he?" Jack asked dubiously.

"No, not, him; do you remember the one who is always praying for you, the one who is ready to die for you and the one who wishes to live with you forever."

"Oh, my God, Nova...my dearest Nova. How could I forget to tell her name!"

"I thought that...even if you forget to tell your parents name, definitely you would tell her name!" Saint Francis laughed.

While they continued all these interesting talks, Matt returned from his room carrying a candle in his hand.

"Here is the candle Santa, could you please tell me, why do you need this?" Matt asked while he handed over it to Santa.

"I need it, I need it. Say good bye to Brother Francis and let's go to somewhere."

"To where?" Jack asked.

“It is a suspense, we want to come back before dawn, Good bye Dear brother Francis of Assisi, we have a journey to go.”

“Good bye dear brother Saint Francis of Assisi. See you again.” Jack and Matt gave farewell. The moving image of Saint Francis in the parchment disappeared like the letters vanished before. At the same time, the light of the parchment also vanished.

CHAPTER- 7

THE STRANGE MAN IN THE DARKNESS

Santa opened his mouth and blew up the air on the candle stick. Within a second, a small tongue of fire appeared upon it as though a spark from his mouth caught on it. The flame started to flicker in the air. Santa looked around the room, grabbed two jackets from the opened wardrobe and threw them on his two adventurer friends.

“Hurry up and put on these jackets quickly. Don’t forget to cover your heads with the hoods, because it is too cold outside.” Santa advised them.

“Santa, why should we go now in this dark and would you please tell us where to go?” Jack Batson asked a little reluctantly.

“There is no time to waste or speak about it. Let us discuss the matter on the way. Hurry up, let’s go now.” Santa rushed towards the windows and opened them slowly but carefully, without making any noise. As he opened the windows the moonlight peeped down through it and the granite floor in the bedroom flooded in the moonlight.

The windows in the room were very large and protected by strong steel bars across it. Santa raised his right hand, and made a *Sign of the Cross* in the air against the window. Suddenly, the iron rods disappeared, as though they were melted in the breeze that came into the room from outside.

“Please come and stand by my both sides.” Santa advised.

Jack and Matt approached him and stood beside him on either side. Their minds were anxious to know about the next course of action. They didn’t get any clue as Santa was always mysterious in his deeds. Anyway, they were ready to follow him as they gained full confidence in him.

“Now give me your hands.” Santa requested.

Jack stood on the right side and Matt on the left. Santa grabbed firmly around their wrists and asked them to close their eyes. They obeyed him.....After a while he asked them to open their eyes and he released his hold.

When they opened their eyes, they were standing in the middle of a thick forest. It was pitch dark; darker than in Danger Forest.

“Where are we now? Why did we come here?” Jack Batson asked doubtfully.

It was very cold and they could see the candle that Santa lighted up standing above their head floating in the mid-air. That was the only light in the vicinity. Their faces were gleaming in the candle light.

“Why did you bring us here?” Matt was astonished.

“Do you have any idea about the place we stand?” Santa asked.

“No?” Both replied instantly.

“Have you heard about the garden of Gethsemane where our Lord Jesus Christ prayed many times, especially after The Last Supper?”

“Yes Santa, we have read about it.” Matt replied as though he felt a little bit irritated. He felt Santa was taking a boring class about the subject which everyone knows.

“We are in the same place; we are standing in the middle of the garden of Gethsemane, but no time to spend here. We must go now, no time to waste...Come fast!” Santa said.

Santa didn’t wait for a reply from his fellow travellers. He started to move swiftly. Jack and Matt couldn’t understand, why he is rushing like a mad man. Yet, they didn’t say anything about it. They couldn’t get a clue about their destination. They felt angry inside about Santa’s sole decision to take them for an unwarranted ride in this severe cold weather. Yet, they followed him like a flock going behind their master.

Chilling wind started to blow from somewhere. They started to shiver in the cold even though they were wearing thick woollen jackets and their heads covered with hoodies.

“Do you have any idea about where he is taking us to?” Jack whispered to Matt.

“No idea! I think he is a crack to put us into these troubles in this midnight, depriving our sleep.” Matt replied angrily.

“I think he would have some other plans for us. Let’s be patient Matt, everything will be alright soon...be cool.” Jack didn’t lose hope.

“Alright, I got annoyed, because he is taking us in this midnight. If I get a bed here amidst these thick trees, surely I would sleep without any trouble. I don’t care about the cold wind or horrible weather. What I need is just a place to nestle.”

“Don’t think of yourself Matt. Look, he is very old; even then he took such a venture in this cold midnight only for our benefit. I hope there is a great news waiting for us at the end of this journey.”

While they shared their thoughts, Santa was moving swiftly in front of them and they followed him at the same pace. Santa was very focused about his destination and never heeded to their conversation. Above their heads the candle light moved in the air, at the same pace as they moved. When they paused to take a gasp, it also paused. After twenty minutes they came out from that thick forest and came out into a deserted land.

They realized that they were standing on a cliff when they looked downwards. They could see some yellow lights hither and thither in the distance, coming out from the houses in the valley. They had to travel another one hour to climb down the hill to reach the valley. The moon shone over them from the sky most of the time, but sometimes the dark clouds obscured it. They could see their surroundings and an unsealed road in the moonlight.

“Let’s move further through that way.” Santa pointed to the mud road and increased his speed without any hesitation.

They heard the church bells resonate in the distance as it swung in the wind. As they moved further they could see vegetation on both sides. They were wondering, how come it is lush green everywhere even though it was an arid zone. While they moved on, dust carried by the wind was blowing against them making their journey difficult to enter the valley.

They moved further and further and reached the valley. It was wheat fields everywhere. As the wind passed through the wheat plants, they danced and bowed their head, as though they were showing respect and a warm welcome to Santa and his fellow travellers.

“Do you know the speciality of this wheat field?” Santa asked, but didn’t wait for their answer, as if he knew that they didn’t know the answer:

“It was through the same wheat field our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles passed through to go to the garden of Gethsemane, to spend their night in prayer and meditation. It was from here on the day of Sabbath, the Pharisees could see the Apostles as eating the wheat and questioned the Lord, why His disciples were eating food instead of fasting. It was then the Lord commented that Sabbath is for men but men are not for Sabbath.”

While Santa narrated this incident from the Holy Bible, he increased his pace more than before and this time it was not easy for Jack and Matt to cope up with his speed. So they had to literally jog to match with his pace. They heard the sound of a stream flowing somewhere far, and sharpened their ears to detect its direction.

Still it was dark, but Santa didn't seem like cared about it. The candle continued glowing above their heads and floated in the same pace that they moved. With the help of the candle light, the roads were very clearly visible for their easy night walk, without any fear from stumbling down. Besides, the moon which peeped out occasionally from the blanket of the dark rainy clouds also showered light upon their path, as though to pilot through the right way.

Jack looked at the watch, the time was 1:33 AM. Santa didn't speak anything now, and he seemed like increasing his walking speed at every moment. Now Jack also felt irritated; so he asked angrily:

“Where are you taking us? Open your mouth and tell us the truth, otherwise we are going back!”.

“Dear children, please calm down. I shall tell you everything. Now, it is not the time to speak, they are waiting for you.”

This time they heard the flowing of water more clearly as they passed through another wheat field. They passed that wheat field and reached beside a stream.

“Drink the water from this stream if you are tired. It is one of the tastiest water, I ever drank. Do you know the origin and end of this stream? This stream flows towards the river Jordan and merges into it.” Santa paused for a while and then continued:

“As we all know the river Jordan is very famous through the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ by Saint John the Baptist. The water from this stream is the very water which purifies river Jordan's water, and make it good to drink. This stream is known as the 'Stream of Hope'. The people who know about the mystical powers of this stream come to drink from it. When the people are tired or distressed, or affected by any types of diseases, they come and drink from it and get cured. People who come with hope have never left unanswered. What they wish, exactly happen to them. That is why it is called 'Stream of Hope'.”

In the beginning, Jack and Matt were hesitant to drink from that stream. When they heard Santa saying about its magical power, they knelt down, bend over to the stream. Even though cold, both hurriedly drank some water, as they were very thirsty.

“Wow! It is sweet like honey and very delicious.”

They looked at each other and amazed. They couldn't express the happiness that filled their hearts when they drank that *Holy Water*. The water had the sweetest fragrance of Rose Flower!

“Do you know the origin of this stream? It starts from the beautiful valley of Sharon- where we find the most beautiful Rose flowers in the world. And you should see the people lives in Sharon valley. In my opinion, they are the most beautiful people in the world because they are drinking this magical water every day.” Santa said and resumed his walk at the same fast pace as he did before.

“Santa, do you mean that we are inside the country of Israel.” Jack asked.

“So, I think.... We.... are going for a.... pilgrimage to.... Golgotha?” Matt stammered.

“No...Not so, my dear children. We are inside the country of Israel, but not yet ready for a pilgrimage. You can do it later. Come fast, they will be waiting for us.”

While Santa said this, a wind blew and put off the candle light. Suddenly darkness spread over them. At the same time the clouds had obscured the moon for a while, so they planned to wait until the path is clear. For a while they didn't hear the voice of Santa, so they felt as though he had abandoned them in that darkness in the country side of Israel.

“Santa, are you with us?” Jack asked.

“Yes, I am.” A voice echoed in the darkness.

Again, when the moon appeared over them in the sky they could see the place clearly like it was before. They couldn't hear anymore words from Santa. He was not speaking at all, instead he was just leading them through the muddy road in the moon light.

They walked and walked and finally reached under a Sycamore tree. They could see that it was a huge tree with heavy trunk and long branches. Its branches stretched out towards all directions and made a big roof, as though to give cool shade for the travellers in the daytime from the scorching sun. Besides, the tree seemed very old. They could see something written on a wooden board with glowing ink and was stuck upon the lower part of the trunk. Jack and

Matt could read the following words inscribed on it: *"Lord Jesus Christ conquered the heart of Zacchaeus as He passed this way. Lord stood under this tree, looked into his heart and commanded him to climb down from the status and pride that he possessed, like a loving father orders his naughty son. Jesus' call, out of love, converted Zacchaeus' entire life to repent of his sins and made him one of his faithful disciples."*

"WHEN GOD CALLS YOU, KEEP ASIDE YOUR OWN DREAMS BUT FOLLOW HIM. OUR BRILLIANCE MAY ADVISE THAT IT IS NOT THE RIGHT WAY AND GOD'S PLANS ARE WRONG. BUT TIME WILL PROVE THAT GOD WAS ALWAYS RIGHT AND YOU WERE WRONG. SO ALWAYS LISTEN TO GOD, THEN NOBODY CAN DEFEAT YOU." Santa said while Jack and Matt were reading that inscription.

Jack again looked at his watch; the time was 3:50 AM. He and his brother were so tired and exhausted when they reached beside the stream; but the delicious water that they drank from the 'Stream of Hope' helped them to regain the energy. The moon was beaming over them as they stood under the Sycamore tree.

"Dear, Santa, how far do we have to go now?" Jack asked eagerly.

"Not very far my dear children, we don't need to go so far now. We have almost finished the journey. Now let us take some rest and I want to talk to you."

Santa said and three of them sat under the sycamore tree, upon the stones that seemed like plain smooth seats. Suddenly, Jack and Matt noticed the change of Santa's face. They couldn't see any longer the long snow white beard; instead it was a bright shining clean shaved face of a handsome man. His face was shining brighter than the moonlight. As they looked at his gleaming face, they felt like looking at another a small round moon that just came down from sky into earth.

"What happened to you dear Santa, are you the same Santa that brought us here or someone else? Where did your beard disappear? How come your face shine like a moon in the sky?" Jack Batson asked curiously.

"I think, his beard caught fire from the candle light's sparks, and lost his beautiful snow white beard!" Matt joked.

"No, my dear children, you are mistaken! I am not Santa as you think. He has gone, after handing over you into my safe hands." The handsome man replied calmly.

When they heard this, they couldn't just believe his words. They screamed and jumped out from the seats with fear. Their face turned red and eyes bulged out and they felt like trapped in the clutches of a dark Lord, who would become a vampire at any time to suck out their blood.

"Tell us who you are, and why did you threaten Santa to go back to our home?" Matt asked hiding his nervousness.

"Dear children, don't be afraid, I never threatened him. He finished his duty and left. Now it is my duty to lead you through the right path to reach your destination. Jack, I was doing this duty since your birth. Trust me, I am telling you the truth, I am not Santa or any other saints. I am your Guardian Angel, appointed by Almighty God to guide and protect you. Since the very moment when you were born into the womb of your mother, I was appointed by God. Our Lord sent me to be with you to protect you from all the problems, dangers and obstacles that you would face in your earthly life. I was always with you everywhere, but you didn't see me. I watched over you every moment, to make sure that you are safe under my guardianship. I consoled you when you cried, and I laughed with you when you were happy. I sat beside you as vigilant while you nestled on your bed, even then you didn't notice me. When you were in great pain, I came for your aid, and tried to make you happy. Do you remember a miracle happened a few years ago, when you were just 20 years old? You fell from the waterfall near to your bungalow, and drowned into the whirlpool of the river, but you escaped from death. You felt as though a mysterious hand grabbed you from death and took you safely to the bank; yet you didn't realize it was me who saved you."

When Jack and Matt heard this, they knelt down and prayed the following prayer taught by their mom Jenna:

"Angel of God, My Guardian Dear

To Whom God's Love

Commits me here

Ever this day, be at my side

To light and guard, rule and guide.

Amen."

It was a great thrilling experience for them to see an Angel with their own eyes. Both stretched out their hands and touched his hand. It was like touching a human being who had

flesh, bone and everything a man has. When the Angel rose from the stone seat, he seemed like a seven feet tall giant with a well-built body.

“My dear children, I am very pleased at your prayer and God send me to guide you through the right path, to reach your destination. Since your birth, I never let you alone, even if you were not seeing me physically. I was with you throughout this journey, since you left home with Santa. Even in the future we will meet each other, when God permit us. Other times I will be obscured from vision, but remember, I will continue to be with you even if you are not seeing me.” The Guardian Angel said.

“Do I have a Guardian Angel?” Matt asked unhappily because his own guardian Angel didn’t give an apparition in front of him.

“Yes, my dear child, every human being has a Guardian Angel, whether they believe it or not. Your Guardian Angel is right beside you, but still God has forbidden him from appearing to you. So, fervently pray to God with hope, to allow you to meet your Guardian Angel.”

“Could you please tell us your name my dear Guardian Angel?” Jack requested reverently.

“I am forbidden to say my name, so you can call me brother; in fact we all are children of God.”

“Then my dear Guardian Angel please tell us, where you are leading us?” Jack requested, while he was watching carefully his Guardian Angel.

The Guardian Angel’s face was very similar to Jack’s face. If anyone who see Jack walking with his Guardian Angel they would think that they are twin brothers. But their similarity was only on their faces. The Guardian Angel’s body was covered with a white luminous aura that emitted light rays everywhere.

“I am sorry to tell you that I am forbidden to reveal our destination. Trust me and please follow me. My dear children don’t be afraid, you are going to a secure place.”

They walked swiftly and finally reached a village where they could see many small houses made of bricks. Some houses were completely hidden in darkness, yet they could see some candle lights peeping out through the windows, from some other houses. While passing through the street they saw a child, who had no arms and legs lying on the road on a cloth. He was shivering with the cold. The child’s mother was seen crouching beside him and she was praying:

“Oh, dear God, God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, save my child. If you are not helping us, he will die soon. Only in you, I trust. The physicians couldn’t cure my child. Now, I lost my whole wealth for the treatment of my child. Everybody abandoned us and we lost our house. Nobody in the world is ready to save my child. Please save us.”

Guardian Angel stood beside her and called her:

“My dear child, why are you crying? Do you think that our God is helpless to save you and your child, and return back everything what you have lost?”

The woman raised her head and saw the Guardian Angel as standing beside her. He stretched out his hands and helped her to stand up from her crouching position. She stood on her feet beside him and looked at his gleaming face and glistening eyes.

“I know you are a Holy Man who came from God, because when you spoke to me the feeling of joy and peace filled my hearts. Please tell me Holy Man who you are. I am sure that you are sent by God to save my child.”

The Guardian Angel didn’t answer her question, instead he knelt down and touched her child with his hand. Then he ordered:

“My dear child, in the Name of true God Jesus Christ, I command you to rise up from your cloth.”

When Guardian Angel touched him and commanded him in Jesus’ name, a white light appeared among them and covered the child like a blanket. That very moment the child stood on the ground in his own legs and hugged his mother with his own arms. This miracle really startled the mother, the child, Jack and Matt, so they knelt down in front the Guardian Angel with great awe. Then the mother cried:

“Oh, God, you saved my child!” Then she started to weep.

“My dear sister, I am nothing, I am just a servant of our God Jesus Christ who cured your child. So don’t give me thanks, give your thanks to Jesus Christ the Almighty. Don’t adore me, it is injustice. Give adoration only to Jesus who is only worthy to be adored. I am just an instrument in his hands. Don’t worry, your husband who abandoned you before two years, will come this morning to receive you and your child back. Jesus heard your prayers and touched his life. Now he repents on his wrong decision. Now he loves you more than you love him. Forgive

him what he has done to you in the Name of Jesus. May our Lord Jesus Christ's blessings be with you now and forever. Amen."

Guardian Angel blessed the mother and her child. The next moment, the Guardian Angel started to walk, so Jack and Matt followed him.

"It is the first time ever in my life, I see a miracle with my own eyes. Now we believe that you are one of the Holy Angels of God came down from Heaven." Jack whispered to his Guardian Angel as they increased the speed.

"My dear children, I know that you are amazed about what happened to that mother and her child. The child born without limbs, now can walk and hug his mother. The woman who was abandoned by her husband is going to get back her husband. Do you think, it is a miracle? IF YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO YOU. YOU WILL SEE GREAT MIRACLES IN YOUR LIFE. THOSE WHO TRUST IN JESUS SHALL NOT PERISH..."

"Can you please tell us... what was that light...which we could see as covering the child while you touched him?" Matt stammered.

"It was the Holy Spirit. Do you still think that it was me who performed that miracle? It wasn't me but the Holy Spirit of our Lord who healed the child. PRAY TO BE ANOINTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. WHEN HOLY SPIRIT COMES DOWN UPON US, WE WILL ACT AS THE INSTRUMENT OF JESUS CHRIST. THEN EVERY IMPOSSIBLE THING WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR YOU, WHICH HUMAN BEINGS CALL SUPERNATURAL."

A cool wind from the western side passed over them, but they didn't feel cold. Jack and Matt were in another world. They were very happy about what they could see and what they heard from the Guardian Angel. While they continued their conversations, they crossed another road and reached in front of a two-storied granite house showered in the moonlight.

They could see a staircase made of granites leads to upstairs. Guardian Angel started to climb up the steps and Jack and Matt followed him. Finally they reached in front of a door made of olive wood. They heard the whispering of a crowd of people from inside.

"Who are those people inside?" Jack asked.

"Dear children, they were waiting for your arrival, and you know we came all the way only to meet them. Please wait here, I shall be back soon." By saying this, the Guardian Angel

disappeared, as though he had dissolved into the air. Within a minute, the door in front of them flung open and they could see a man with white beard and moustache, who kept an angelic smile on his face, standing in front of them. He had worn a rugged grey hobbit. Even though he was very old, his smile and face were very attractive like a youth.

“My dear children, peace of our loving Lord be with you. I beg you to come in!” He welcomed them humbly and they entered the room.

CHAPTER- 8

THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY GRAIL

When Jack and Matt entered the room, they could see a group of people standing beside the window and talking each other. They were around seventeen men including Jack's Guardian Angel and three women in the room. In the corner, they could see Jack's Guardian Angel standing and conversing with a young man who looked very much similar to Matt in countenance and appearance.

In the centre of the room there was an octagonal table made of oak wood. The table was arranged for dinner with a few wooden plates, some loaves of bread, fish fry, olive butter and a few bottles of wine. Three burning candles on golden candle sticks had also been placed upon the table, which flickered simultaneously when the breeze blew on it. A few sandalwood chairs were arranged around the table.

"Please be seated, my dear children" The oldest man among the crowd who welcomed them into the room showed them the chairs. Everyone in the room had worn rugged sack clothes which were old and torn as though they have just come from an ancient era.

When Jack and Matt sat down upon the chairs, everyone except the Guardian Angel and the person conversed with him stood behind them. All the men and women bend towards and kissed them on their cheeks as a sign of welcoming to their community.

"Dear children..." the oldest man started to speak:

"Our Lord and God Jesus Christ brought you here to give you an important duty to find out the stolen Holy Grail, and to show others that God always uses only humble people as His instruments to perform miracles. He was with us since He created the very first man. But, with our sins we went away from His presence. So, He sent His only begotten son to give us eternal life through His Only Son's death and resurrection. Now, He is with us through Holy Spirit, as the Helper and Giver of Life. I am Simon who is also known as Peter the Apostle and these eleven of my brothers are..."

When he said this, the rest of them stood closer to Jack and Matt and introduced themselves. Meanwhile, St. Peter the Apostle continued:

"These are.... Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Didymus who is also known as Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus who also is known as Jude, Simon who

was called the Zealot or Simon the Cananean, Matthias, Luke, Mark, Joseph of Arimathea and our these three sisters are Veronica, Mary Magdalene and Martha.”

While Saint Peter introduced the Apostles and the rest to them, they were watching Jack’s Guardian Angel and the person beside him. After introducing everyone to Jack and Matt, Peter the Apostle blessed them by making a sign of cross and chanted:

“The Holy Trinity One God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, will be with you forever and ever. Amen.”

“Could you please tell me who that gentleman is? He looks similar to me!” Matt requested to Saint Peter as he glanced over to that young man who stood beside Jack’s Guardian Angel.

When heard this question the Guardian Angel and the gentleman stopped their talk, looked at Matt and came closer to him. The doppelganger raised his right hand, placed upon Matt’s head and started to run his fingers through his hairs. Matt felt like his dad caressing him.

“Dear child, you don’t identify me, even though our relationship started long 20 years ago! You can call me your companion or guard. Whatever you call me out of love doesn’t matter. Normally we are not allowed to disclose our name to others, but God allowed me to reveal my name to you. So to introduce myself, I am Abel your Guardian Angel.”

Suddenly, Jack and Matt jumped off their chairs as though got an electric shock from it. They knelt down and said the prayer ‘Angel of God’ which their mom encouraged them to pray every day to invoke the help of the Guardian Angel.

“My dear children...” Abel, the Guardian Angel said.

“I am very happy to give you an apparition for whom I was an invisible companion for many years. Jesus loves every human being as His own children but our Lord is sad because we treat him badly with our own sins. All his children are going behind worldly pleasures ignoring His eternal love. They don’t understand that they would get only temporary satisfaction from these material pleasures. But, the day will come, when those temporal belongings, which they thought will be with them forever, would leave them alone...then only the children of God will understand that only God’s love is eternal...” Abel the Guardian Angel became emotional and all the people gathered in the room thought that he was going to cry...Abel didn’t cry, he regained his normal self in a moment and continued:

“Let’s talk about it later, right now we don’t have any time to waste. We want to retrieve the Holy Grail, because it fell into the wrong hands. Awake and ready for the battle.”

A pin drop silence spread in the room for a few minutes. Then Matt broke the silence:

“Is it an easy task for us to accomplish? We don’t have any clues who has stolen it and what their motives are.”

“This battle we begin is not to get defeated but to defeat our enemies. NEVER START A JOURNEY EXPECTING FAILURES AT THE END, INSTEAD, ALWAYS EXPECT SUCCESS. YOU WOULD CERTAINLY MEET WHAT YOU EXPECT TOWARDS THE END. So, be ready for your success.”

“Yes, dear Abel, we understand the seriousness of this case. Please tell us, what we, the two worms in the sight of other human beings, can do in this matter?” Jack asked eagerly.

Every Apostles and the rest of the people in the room were listening to these conversation, then St. Thomas the Apostle started to speak:

“Dear children, don’t think that you are just two worms and don’t doubt the way I doubted about our Lord’s resurrection. Never think that you are worthless. You think so because you are humble. But, BEING HUMBLE DOESN’T MEAN UNDERESTIMATE YOUR OWN VALUE. IF YOU DON’T GIVE VALUE FOR YOURSELF, CAN’T EXPECT IT FROM OTHERS. Always believe in God’s power and His care for us. Our Lord can perform miracles for you if you are ready to be an instrument for that. You may think it is impossible for us human being, but everything is possible for God. Doesn’t matter, how difficult our problems are, everything is simple for God. IF GOD COULD CREATE THE WHOLE UNIVERSE WITH ONE WORD, HE CAN GIVE YOU EVERYTHING WHATEVER YOU ASK FOR.”

“Tell us what to do precisely?” Jack was too anxious.

“A carriage will come to pick you up within an hour; it will take you to a priest named Fr. Angelo. He is a great man and would be the best helper for you in the mission to discover the Holy Grail. Whatever be your plans or decisions, discuss with him, he has profound knowledge in the history of the Holy Grail and in Theology. Whatever doubts you have, he is competent to clarify...” St. John the Apostle said in his quiet voice.

“So do you really think that we can discover it?” Matt asked doubtfully.

“Dear children, believe, God has great plans for you. He has appointed you to do this divine task. IF GOD HAS ENTRUSTED A DUTY TO SOMEONE, HE WILL SHOW THEM THE WAYS TOO. GOD MAY LEAD YOU THROUGH THE THORNY PATHS DOESN’T MEAN THAT YOU WOULDN’T MEET SUCCESS. REMEMBER EVEN CHRIST

HIMSELF HAD TO DIE ON THE CROSS TO RESURRECT FROM DEATH. IF LORD DIDN'T DIE HOW CAN WE SAY THAT HE RESURRECTED FROM DEATH? SO NO DEATH MEANS, NO RESURRECTION. Fr. Angelo will be a good helper for you and he would act as the mediator between you and us, so if you have to contact us, just let him know.”

“What will be the role of Guardian Angels; will they guide us?” Jack asked.

“Yes, surely they will be your true companions in your way. But, God has limited the time for both of you to see them. But remember, they will be with you all the time as invisible companions to light and guard, rule and guide.” St. Peter the Apostle answered.

“Yes, we do understand it dear Apostle, but can we ask your permission to go back home and request permission from our parents and grandparents before taking up this responsibility?” Matt asked the Apostle Peter.

“No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. So, both of you are forbidden from going back. St. Nicolas had already gone back to tell your family about it.” St. Thomas the Apostle said as he walked towards them. He held a bottle of wine in his right hand and two wine glasses on the other. He removed the cork from the bottle. Then he poured out the foaming wine into the glasses and handed over to them. It was a red wine fermented for 500 years and was superbly delicious and sweet. Jack and Matt drank two glasses of wine each and they listened patiently to the conversations of the crowds in the room. He checked his watch, and it was nearly six in the morning, yet no sunrays appeared in the sky. When they looked through the windows, it was completely dark outside. Suddenly he realized that, his watch was showing the time in Billston, not in Israel.

Then the woman named Mary Magdalene approached them with two plates of roasted mutton seasoned with pepper. It was very delicious and mouth-watering. Even though they weren't hungry, Jack and Matt ate it like greedy dogs. St. Thomas the Apostle, poured some more wine and filled the glasses again. After that delicious banquet, Jack and Matt emptied the glasses again.

Suddenly they heard the noise of the hoofs outside, like thunder in the sky. Jack and Matt looked through the window and it was still dark outside. Yet, they could see a cart drawn by two magnificent white horses as coming towards them. The horses and its coachman were feebly visible in the lamp light that hung beside him. While the horses galloped, the lamp shook wildly, and the driver tried to fix it in the right position with his left hand, while he held his right hand firmly upon the reins to control the horses. The hoofs continued to thunder steadily

for some more time on the ground, and finally receded making it clear that the cart has stopped on the courtyard.

“The coachman arrived, now you may start. We all wish you good luck and may God bless you.” St. Peter the Apostle said and hugged them.

After Peter every men and women in the hall hugged, kissed and wished them farewell. That very moment Jack felt that finally his dream has come true and he could become a celebrity. But, Matt felt like the crowd in the hall were treating them like two militants, who were going for their final battle to the war field to die for their motherland.

The door in front of them opened and Jack and Matt went outside. Everyone in the room were peeping upon them from the glowing window while they climbed down the stair case, but nobody accompanied them to the horse cart.

“Hai, I am Arthur Lee, the coachman of Fr. Angelo, please get in, it is too cold outside.” The coachman said.

The coachman was a brown skinned man with long moustache, long nose like an eagle’s beak, sharp face, and shining eyes. He had worn a blue jacket and a red cowboy hat. He offered his hand to help them to climb in and both got in. They sat on the dark leather cushioned seats and the coachman lashed at the horses with a whip. Suddenly, the calm horses whinnied, galloped and started to run. Even though, their seating area was covered fully from every side, Jack and Matt could enjoy the outside beauty through the window. Meanwhile Arthur Lee controlled the horses, he turned back his head frequently to speak with them. He behaved very friendly towards them.

“What are your names and where do you come from?” Arthur Lee asked.

“We are from Billston, I am Batson...Jack Batson and he is my brother Matt..” Jack answered while looking out through the window.

Suddenly, he could notice something fire-like falling down from the sky in a distance. So he elbowed Matt to show that incident. When Matt looked at him, Jack pointed his index finger in the darkness into the direction where he could see that incident.

“Arthur, can you please stop the coach for a moment?” Jack asked.

“Why, what happened mate?”

“We saw something strange like a comet or fire as falling down from the sky. I think it fell yonder, just a walk away distance from here. So, we want to check what it is.”

Arthur pulled the reins and stopped the horses, meanwhile Jack and Matt alighted from the coach and rushed towards the place where they saw the fire. They tramped down the bushes and finally reached at that place. They could see a fire that covered a bush which resembled the fire of God in the mount of Sinai in which God appeared to the prophet Moses. It was a crackling, crepitating, snapping and roaring fire which appeared like a fireball that came down from heaven. Even though the fire was burning it never swallowed any bushes. Moreover they didn't feel any heat while standing beside that calm fire.

"Dear children, come to me!" A sound like thunder commanded them from the fire.

They hesitated to approach the fire, as they were shocked to hear a voice from it. Yet, they didn't move away from their position and stood in silence as though they were numbed.

"My dear children, don't be afraid, come close to me." This time the sound changed from thunder into a sweet voice, so they approached the fireball and knelt down beside it.

"Oh Lord, please tell us who you are, and what do you want?" Jack asked without daring to raise his bended head. He asked like Saul in the Book of Acts who fell down from the horse's back, while he was on his way to torture the Christians. Saul's fall transformed his whole life from a torturer to a saint.

"My dear children, don't be afraid. I am your God and Lord, Jesus Christ. Don't be afraid; you will face many attacks from the enemies while you approach towards your goal, but, don't despair, for I will be with you forever to help you. I am giving you My Spirit who will lead you through the right way. When the Spirit come down upon you, everything will be possible for you."

"But, O, Lord, how can we believe You? Still, we are doubtful whether You are really Jesus Christ or is it the trap of a hideous devil. If it is true give us a sign to believe Your word, or please perform a miracle for us." Jack said while they got up from their kneeling position and sat on the rocks beside them.

"O.K. dear children, surely I will show you signs that I am Jesus Christ. You are going to face a danger soon and I will save you from that danger which can cause even death. Then you will understand that I am the God Almighty."

"Danger...please let's know what type of danger You mean O, Lord?" Jack and Matt trembled with fear as they heard about the forthcoming danger.

“My dear children, don’t be afraid, I am always with you. Go with the coachman and you will experience your God’s eternal love.”

After these words the fire extinguished and disappeared from the bushes. At the same time a mountain breeze caressed them to cool them. They heard heavy footsteps approaching them. They turned back and looked- it was the coachman!

“What are you doing here; come fast we have to go miles before reach our destination.” The coachman said while he raised the whip in his hand and lashed in the air. Even though, it was night, they could clearly figure out the coachman by the full moon light that showered on him. It was the first time they could view him. He was extraordinarily tall, but very lean. His jacket was weightless and in the wind it fluttered like bird’s wings. Frequently the wind beat more harshly and his over coat flapped to cover his face partially. Yet, they could clearly notice his face gleaming like a cruel vampire and his eyes glistening like ember.

“Let’s go!” He said harshly and the voice echoed in the darkness like the command of a master to his slaves. At the next moment, he came forward, snatched their wrists and dragged them towards the coach. His hands were strong like iron and they realized that it would be vain to release his grip. So they followed him like two dogs obeying their master. Finally the coachman pushed them into the coach and angrily closed the door behind. Then he ascended onto his seat and slashed the whip pitilessly at the horses. In the next moment, the quiet horses galloped and started to run. While controlling the horses with his reins, the coachman looked back towards Jack and Matt, and chanted a magic spell upon them. All on a sudden, Jack and Matt fell into an unconscious state.

CHAPTER- 9

THE STRANGERS

When Jack and Matt opened their eyes again, they were lying on a very cold floor in a dark room. There was only one candle light that helped them to see vaguely where they were. They realized that they were in a big trap, because they were inside a room that was surrounded by iron bars that stood against them like guards. They realized that they were imprisoned either by the coachman or somebody in his group.

It was pitch dark and pin drop silence everywhere. Jack and Matt stood on the floor and Jack grabbed the candle from the table where it was burning. He walked slowly in every direction in the room to find out at least one key hole to escape. It was a small rectangular room. Three sides of it was made by concrete slabs and the fourth side with long thick iron bars.

“Jack, what happened to us? Which is this place?” Matt asked while groping Jack Batson’s hands in the darkness.

“I don’t understand, what is happening to us? Don’t despair, let’s try to find out a way to escape from this horrible dungeon.”

“I think the coachman trapped us.” Matt said desperately.

“That might be true! Do you remember, when he turned towards us, chanted some magical spells and we lost our consciousness?”

“Yes, I do remember. How can we escape now?”

Suddenly, they heard someone’s footsteps coming towards them. It came closer and closer and finally they could see the rays of two candle lights approaching them. It was coming from a long corridor that was beyond their vicinity. Tick, tick, tick...their hearts started to beat more violently and their blood pressure went up. The sound and the candle light came nearer and finally they could see two tall lean human figures approaching them carrying one candle light each in their hands. They finally stopped their walk at the front of the iron bars. In the candle light Jack and Matt could see their faces partially.

The two of them looked like twins. They had round bulging eyes and long dark beard. Their nails looked like a tiger's claws. They banged at the iron bars and started to laugh like two beasts. Their unexpected horrible laughs echoed in the room and bewildered Jack and Matt. Jack and Matt couldn't understand who they were and what was their motive behind the kidnap.

"Who are you and what do you want?" Jack asked in a shivering tone.

"We...ha...ha...ha...we are the beasts from hell to kill both of you and suck your blood. It is your end, hideous creatures."

"What did we do against you to kill us?" Matt asked pretending courageous.

"We know, you are after the Holy Grail...it doesn't belong to you, it belongs to our King Satan. You have no right to take it back and keep with you! We know why are you searching for it; it has magical powers to conquer this world. Now, you made a mistake. Very soon you dirty worms are going to pay for it."

"We don't care about whatever happens to our life. But, be assured, you and your liar king Satan won't get it. It is our duty to retrieve our Lord's Holy Grail and put back to where it was stolen from. Even if we have to give up our life for that good reason, we are ready to accept it. We are not afraid of any miseries, hardships, swords or any threats. We are ready to sacrifice our life for Lord Jesus Christ; then we will be fortunate to sit in Heaven, on the lap of our Lord." Jack answered emotionally.

"Stupid worms, don't utter nonsense. There is no Heaven, and there is no life after death. And your Jesus Christ has no power to save your life. He already died on the Cross and he couldn't save himself. It is a big lie of Christians to proclaim that Jesus Christ resurrected from death and ascended to Heaven. You the Christians believe that He still lives. Don't be silly to believe that Jesus Christ will come to save you from your enemies." One of the beastly men said in great anger and smashed at the iron grill.

The other man was observing them keenly. At the same time, Jack and Matt noticed that he was hiding something behind in his hands. Then that man whispered something onto the other man's ear. Then the other man's eyes seemed like bulging out emitting anger sparks. At the very next moment they opened the iron door and entered the cell. Those beasts pulled Jack and Matt down to the floor. As the attack was unexpected, they couldn't defend themselves. The beasts then sprayed something into Jack's and Matt's eyes and nose; they lost their consciousness instantly.

When they opened their eyes again they were lying on the ground under the clear blue sky. They could hear the gushing and flowing sound of a river beneath. Now they could see clearly what was around them. They were lying somewhere on a hill, but two strange men were standing beside them. Each one of them had covered their faces with black clothes, so Jack and Matt couldn't see their faces, besides, they were carrying big guns in their hands. As they had covered their faces, Jack and Matt couldn't identify them. But they could see that those kidnappers' hands were very fat. So Jack and Matt realized that, they weren't the same people whom they met in the dungeon. The maskers started to kick them mercilessly and beaten up their head with the guns. Then they used whips studded with iron nails to lash them violently. After these terrible tortures, they caught Jack and Matt on their necks and made them to stand on the ground.

"Idiots, look here!" both hideous men pointed towards the river, from the cliff they were standing.

"This river is full of wandering hungry devilish alligators. Stupid vermin, we give you one more chance. If you value your life, stop your idiotic plan to find out the Holy Grail and renounce your Jesus Christ. If you do these two things, you will be spared or we are going to throw you both into the river."

Those beastly men started to laugh and it echoed in the air like the roaring of two devils from hell. Matt looked at Jack's face and Jack tried to soothe him:

"My dear Matt, don't be afraid of these blasphemers. If we die today for our Lord Jesus Christ, all our sins will be forgiven and we will be taken to Heaven. Don't be afraid of these people, they can kill only our physical body, but they can't do anything against our soul. Forgive them and embrace death. We are very lucky to die for Jesus Christ. Then our souls will be saved."

These conversations raised their rage and they threw Matt into the river. While falling into the river Matt prayed: "Oh, My Lord Jesus Christ, I am fully yours and entrust my soul into your hands." Jack could see his brave brother drowning down into the water.

Then it was Jack's turn. The kidnappers approached him and asked:

"We give you the last chance to decide. Love your life or die for your Jesus."

"I am ready to die for Jesus like my brother did. May Jesus Christ, forgive you. I forgive you as Jesus forgave my own sins."

Then they carried out their punishment. He was also thrown into the river. Jack realized that he was drowning into the water and he took his last breath. He could see the cruel alligators coming towards him from every direction.

“Oh, God, only for this you brought me here! But, if it is your will, I am ready to die!”

Jack chanted this prayer and closed his eyes and prepared himself happily to die for his faith.

“O, Jesus Christ, I entrust my soul into your hands. Give Matt and me Heaven that you have promised.” Even when faced death, Jack was brave enough to pray so. Seconds passed very swiftly. Seconds became minutes and minutes turned to hour, but nothing happened. So he ventured to open his eyes to realize that he was lying on wet sand, on a riverbank in an unknown place. On that riverbank, he couldn’t see anyone- no masker men, hill or alligators. Was it a dream? No, then where is Matt? He looked around, nobody was lying on the bank except him. What happened to Matt? Even though Jack was brave enough to face death, he started to cry because he lost his dearest brother.

“O, Lord, why did you abandon me? If you want to take a life, take mine; not his. He was your good child. He was very devoted to you, but you took his life and saved the life of a big sinner-me. Why Lord, why did you do this to me?” Lying on the wet sand Jack Batson started to cry loudly. His tears started to flow from his eyes and it blurred his vision.

He heard someone’s footsteps nearby and realized that somebody was approaching him. Suddenly, a heavy hand fell onto his right shoulder. “Stand up!” A male voice ordered him. He got shocked when that strange hand fell onto his shoulder and that voice like thunder echoed in his ears. But he obeyed out of fear to that commanding voice.

He wiped away his tears on his jacket and looked around to see who was talking to him. He could see a group of men being gathered around him. All of them were clad in luxury shining clothes and had worn blue silk hats embroidered with the image of a king seated on a male deer, on their head. But the very man who stood in front of him had worn a golden crown ornamented with different coloured gems. The man had a sword in his hand, its handle also was in gold which was decorated with 10 different coloured gems.

The rest of the men had carried modern guns and long sticks in their hands. Jack was annoyed with their presence, especially when he wished to dissolve his own pains with his tears.

“Who are you intruder, why did you come to my country?” The man with the golden crown asked him.

Jack Batson didn't give him any answer, but he started to run instead. Suddenly, the people chased him and surrounded him. The man with golden crown approached him, raised his sword in the air and pointed towards Jack's chest.

“This man is not willing to answer, so let us take him to our castle and interrogate him.” The man with golden crown commanded.

“Yes, Your Majesty, he seems like a cheat. I think he is an agent from Bettowalsh to spy on us.” A man with brown eye brows and round eyes said.

“If he belongs to our enemy country Bettowalsh, I want to teach him who this King Arthur is.” The man with golden crown replied.

“Yes Lord, we will teach him how to respect our King.”

Then the men approached him more closely like a battalion of army rushing towards a castle to invade it. They had long sticks in their hands and they altogether raised it towards him to beat him up. Somehow Jack snatched one of the sticks and started to defend. He counter-attacked the enemies and ten of them fell down on the ground. It gave him more courage, so he raised the stick again, and smashed at every direction without considering who they are and where to hit. Again, he could knock down two more individuals.

The next moment, somebody hit at the back of his head and he fell onto the ground. He tried to open his eyes and struggled to rise from the ground, but he was helpless. He felt as if the earth around him was rotating. His enemies started to beat him from head to foot and his whole body started to bleed. He couldn't control the severe pain and moaned for help. Again, he got another smash at his head and he lost consciousness.

When he opened his eyes again, he was lying on a granite floor in the open sun. With his opened eyes, he looked around and understood that many people had gathered around him, watching him like an alien who just landed on earth.

“Please give me some water!” Jack Batson begged.

A woman came forward and poured out some water from a jug into his mouth. He gulped the whole water and extinguished his thirst. He groped on the floor and tried hard to stand up

on the ground. The same woman who gave him water, helped him to rise up and Jack stood unsteadily on the ground.

He noticed that woman, she was very old and her skin had wrinkles upon it. She smiled at him, and he noticed that she had only one eye. In the eye socket of her right eye he could see only an empty hole. This sight made him sad and he felt sorry for her.

“Who are you my dear child?” She asked him empathetically.

“I am Jack, came from Billston . Could you please tell me where I am at present?”

“My dear son, this is the land of rivers which is known as Riveria. Why did you come here? I heard from the people that you are a spy came to betray our country.”

“Dear madam, please believe me, I am not a spy or betrayer. I am the victim of a kidnap done by two beastly men. They threw my brother and me into the river with lots of alligators. By the grace of God, I survived from those animals. When I was in the water I lost my consciousness, and somehow I reached on the river bank in your country. I don’t know what happened to my brother. Either the alligators would have killed him or he might have reached somewhere else like me.”

“Dear son, I am sorry to hear the fate of your brother. I trust you. From your facial expressions, I can guess that what you said is true. I think that you are innocent. So, I shall beg the King to release you.”

The King was sitting on a throne, guarded by the security guards, not too far away from Jack. He was watching carefully what Jack and the old woman were talking. Meanwhile many people approached the King with different petitions. Jack could faintly hear what they were speaking. He could also see the King ordering his guards to punish a tall fat man, and they started to whip him mercilessly. Meanwhile the old woman went to the King, knelt down before him and started to beg for Jack’s release. She appraised the King the information she gathered from Jack.

Miracle still happens... The King ordered his guards to set him free as he was convinced by the old woman’s words. One of the guards who was a well-built man with enormous height approached him and said:

“You will be under observation and we will watch you over. Remember, if you do something wrong against the country, you won’t see the next morning. So, be careful when do something

stupid against our Majesty.” With this warning the soldier removed the handcuffs from Jack. At the same time the old woman approached him.

“Let us go dear child?” She said kindly.

“To where?”

“To my house. You are my guest tonight.”

“Madam, thank you for your kindness. But, please tell me who you are and why you saved my life when nobody came forward to help me.”

“I am Agatha and I am a widow. I saved you, because I know you are innocent. We can talk more after reaching home.”

Agatha offered her hand and helped him to stand up. He rose slowly and stood on the ground. Even though she was very old, her hands seemed very powerful like iron rods. They started to walk and passed the citadel wall.

On the way to Agatha’s house, they could see a horse cart coming towards them from the opposite direction, that pulled by four white horses. While it approached the citadel wall, it reduced the speed. Meanwhile Jack Batson could look into it, and he was fortunate to see the travellers inside. Two beautiful pretty young women looked back at him and smiled. He also smiled back, in the meantime the horse cart increased its speed and passed through the entrance.

“Who are those beautiful women?” Jack asked Agatha while they walked homewards.

“They are King Arthur’s two daughters, Amanda and Angela. They are very famous for their beauty all over the world, like their mother Queen Eva!”

CHAPTER- 10

THE APPARITION OF AN ANGEL

Agatha and Jack increased their speed and they passed a muddy road. He could see small cottages on both sides, while they moved further. A cold breeze passed them and they shivered in cold. Jack's clothes were already wet with blood, mud and water; the cold breeze made him to rattle.

"You feel cold, aren't you?" Agatha asked very softly.

"Yes, this is unbearable for me and I am shivering." He answered and looked at her face, sadly.

She offered him the blanket she was wearing. But he refused her offer and said:

"Dear Madam, you are old like my grandma. If I accept your offer, you would die in this cold. Besides, my clothes are dirty and wet. If I wrap my own torso with your clean blanket, it would become dirty. So please keep it with you. What I need tonight is, just a shelter under a secured roof and something to eat and drink. That is more than enough for me. Thanks for your consideration."

Jack stopped for a moment and looked at her wrinkled face. She was looking tenderly at him with her gleaming eyes. Both smiled and Jack continued:

"I am sorry to ask about your family.! Could you please tell me, do you live alone or you have a family?"

"I am staying with my only daughter Christa. She is the only kin I ever have."

While she said this, Jack could see her tears trickling down from her eyes and wet her cheeks. It made him sad as well; he asked quietly:

"Dear Agatha, I am very sorry to hear that. You saved my life and now I made you cry. I am very sorry!"

"It is O.K.!"

"Can you please tell me; where is your husband?"

"I am not married, I am a prostitute. I gave birth to my daughter Christa when I was 22 years old. She is the daughter of the famous merchant Antonio Pedro who was my lover at that time.

You know, I loved him very sincerely, more than my parents! My parents knew his character and warned me. But, I was heedless to their words, and I thought they were making silly allegations against him as they hated him. When they opposed my love, I loved him more ardently. I thought that he was the best man, the best lover in the world. It was my own fault that I fell in love with him.”

When Jack heard this sad story, he was shocked and felt sorry for her. While they continued their journey, they approached a cottage that was protected by a fence. At the back side of the building there stood gigantic pine trees resembling the security guards of King Arthur. It was a lone corner, so Jack couldn't see any houses in the neighbourhood. The fence was strong and made of sharpened wooden pickets and tied together with steel ropes. Besides climbing hydrangea, vine plants were overhanging on the fence. In the middle of the fence stood a big wooden gate and Agatha unlocked it to enter the courtyard. Jack quickly looked around to study its surroundings. It was a small cottage that stood in the middle of a small yet beautiful garden. The cottage roof that were covered with red tiles blazed in the sun light. The courtyard was kept very clean and tidy.

They entered the house and saw a young woman, the same age of Nova, sitting on an easy chair immersed in reading a thick book. Her cheek was rosy and lips were red like the beautiful rose flowers in the Sharon valley. Her gleaming eyes looked overstrained due to insomnia. Yet, she was very beautiful and attractive at the first sight. She stood up and gave a beautiful smile to Jack.

“Hi mama, is he the same Jack Batson whom we expected?” The beautiful young woman asked.

“Yes, my sweetie. He is the one!”

“Mama, I think he is very tired. I have prepared special meal for him, let us give him that food.” She said and went to the kitchen.

“Please be seated!” Agatha said to Jack and he sat on the same chair where the girl was sitting, because he couldn't see any other chairs there.

“So, is this young lady your only daughter Christa?” Jack asked.

“Yes, dear Jack, that is true.”

She grabbed a chair from inside and sat beside him silently. Jack noticed the sudden change in her behaviour and understood that she was very sad; yet he couldn't think of the reason behind it.

“Dear Agatha, please tell me the truth! Why are you looking sad?”

Suddenly, instead of answering his question, she started to cry. While this happened, Christa came back from the kitchen with a cup of coffee and some snacks. She placed it on a tea table and knelt in front of her mother. Christa hugged her and started to cry with her mom.

“My dear mama, please don't cry, ...You know, God won't leave us alone. Don't you remember what happened yesterday, so don't be afraid, God is always with us.”

“Can you please tell me what happened, if it is OK with you?” He requested.

“Yes, Mr. Batson... I shall tell you...” Christa replied while wiping away the tears from her beautiful cheeks. Jack was eager to know what happened to them. Before she started the story, Jack took the coffee cup and drank from it. Her tears dropped on the biscuits. Even though Jack noticed it, he didn't change his facial expression and took a biscuit to eat.

“I have never been fortunate to see my biological father in my life. I know, where he lives. He is a very famous and rich merchant and his name is Antonio Pedro. But I am scared to go and meet him face to face. When I was in my mother's womb, my father rejected her and she went back to her own home. That time, my mama's parents had already died with broken heart, because she ignored them and went with my father. I don't like to introduce him as my father, because he was such a cruel person to give up my mama. My mama has three siblings- two elder sisters and one elder brother. When she got back home, they denied her and kicked her out. She didn't know where to go. At first, she thought of committing suicide, but she knew that it would be a sin against the will of God. She thought about me too, so mama took a decision to go elsewhere, gave birth to me and grew me up. Thus, with a broken heart and wet eyes, she left her home.

Finally she reached in front of a magnificent house by evening. “Ghost Ship”- she read the name of the house hung on a board on its huge gate. The residents in that house were an old couple- an old man named Richardson and his wife Julia. Some supernatural forces enticed her to that home. So, mama went inside and narrated her sad stories to them. Those nice people felt sorry for her and gave shelter in their home.”

“That old couple had a son, who was an artist. When mama reached there, he was away. The couple welcomed my mama to their family like their own daughter. The old woman appointed a nurse to take care of my mama’s pregnancy.

Days passed by. One day while mama was sitting on a chair in their garden, she saw someone coming towards the house passing the gate. He was an attractive young man with green eyes and handsome countenance.”

“When she met him she felt like an Angel appeared before her. He approached mama and asked her who she was. Before mama opened her mouth, Julia came into the scene and introduced them to each other.

He was the old couple’s son Miller. My mom noticed that his smile was very attractive. That night Julia organized a delicious dinner and after that everyone went to bed. The clock in the hall struck at 12:00 midnight and it chimed. After a few minutes, mama heard somebody knocking at her door. She was very concerned about her safety and had the habit of locking the door before going to bed. She panicked hearing the knock in the midnight. So with a trembling voice she asked who it was and why knocking at the door at that time. Then she heard a male voice. It was not the old man, but his son who just arrived that evening.”

“She became nervous and asked him, why he came there to meet her in the wrong time. Suddenly the tone of his voice changed and he started to beg her to open the door. He sobbed and requested again and again to open the door immediately because he wanted to talk to her urgently. So she opened the door. He came inside with a burning candle in his hand, and she noticed that he was sweating and panting. His face was tangled with fear.

“What happened...Tell me, what happened to you?” She asked.

“Could you hear that sound?” He asked while his body was shivering with fear.

“No, I couldn’t hear anything. What sound you heard, please tell me?”

“Agatha, please pray for me. I am trapped.” He said this and started to weep.

“When my mother saw him crying, she felt very sad, because she never expected that from a man who was very handsome. She made him to sit on a chair in her room and asked again, what happened. Then he showed two tattoos on his right arm. One was 666, and other was an upside down cross with a snake that tangled upon it.”

“What is it?” She asked.

“I am doomed.... I am doomed.” He said and started to weep again, covering his face with his hands.

“Please don’t cry, Miller. Please tell me what happened?” She patted on his shoulder to console him.

“Can you please come to my room. I want to show you something!” He grabbed her hand and took her to his room.

“He had his burning candle in his right hand and mama’s hand in the left. Mama’s room was in the ground floor and his was in the first floor. They climbed up the steps and finally reached in front of his room. He pushed the door and it opened with a creaking sound. His room was clearly visible in the moonlight. When they entered the room they could see someone standing beside the window.

“Thus, finally, your time has come.” The image at the window turned and said.

“It was a horrible beast. When they saw it, they got terrified and fell back onto the floor. It was such a terrible, hellish creature. Even the colour of the beast was very dark, and mama could see him very clearly in the mixture of the candlelight and moonlight. The beast’s image made them shiver with fear. Nobody can explain how hideous was his structure. Its body was like a man, but it had two horns like a bull, on its head. Besides it had sharp fangs like a tiger has in its mouth, and a long black tail at the back. There were two large black wings at his back.

At that time a nasty smell of burning sulphur and phosphorous filled the room. A type of white smoke surrounded his body and the beast was roaring like a lion. It was licking its tongue all the time like a wild beast approaching its prey to kill. When Miller saw that beast, he started to howl like a wolf. He hurled himself in front of the beast and begged like a dog that mourns at the feet of its master:

“O lord, please forgive me. I am here under your mercy, you can do whatever you wish to do to me. But I beg you; please don’t punish me. I promise my lord, I won’t betray you again. If I commit the mistakes again, you can punish me...please...”

“But, that beast wasn’t satisfied in his multiple pleas. He didn’t show any mercy upon his prey. The beast grabbed him around his neck with its gigantic arms and threw him through the window onto the courtyard. While the beast caught him, my mama didn’t dare to go close to

the beast to save Miller's life. She didn't dare even to raise her voice. Instead, she ran downstairs into her room, slammed the door behind her, and locked it from inside. When mama reached the room, she was panting. She was afraid that she would be the next prey."

"While she ran away downstairs for her life, she didn't realize that she had snatched a book from the room. It was a diary written by Miller. She threw it onto the bed and waited there, expecting the arrival of the beast that would come to kill her. But nothing happened. After a few hours, when she realized that she was safe, she opened the diary and looked into it. In the first page, she could see triple six. Under that, she saw the picture of the star that normally used for satanic rituals. In the next page, she could see an upside down cross and a snake tangled around it, which was same like the tattoo she could see on Miller's right arm. Under that picture, she could see something scribbled: 'Peace be to the people in Hell.'"

"When she saw these images and writings, she felt more terrified and nervous. She was scared to turn and read more pages. Until the next morning, she didn't dare to move out from her room to other rooms seeking help or explain the misfortune that happened to the couple's son.

When the Sun rose in the sky, she went outside to meet the couple and her nurse. She was shocked to find the house empty. All the bedrooms, kitchen, bathrooms, working area looked deserted. She ventured to go to the courtyard looking for the corpse of Miller, but to her surprise she couldn't see anything there, even any traces of bloodstains. Doubt mounted to that, something strange happened to all the members in Ghost Ship. She realized that she was helpless and it was impossible for her to find out the inmates of the house."

"After that horrible incident, she ran away from that house. Before she left the house, she took Miller's diary with her. From there, she reached this house which was abandoned by its owners due to some unknown reasons. She thought that this house would be suitable for her to live without any trouble from others.

"Since then, this country was ruled by the same King Arthur who was notorious for his cruelty. Anyway, mama took a daring decision to continue here. Thus, she started to live here and gave me birth without the help of any people as we didn't have any neighbours. Even now, we have no neighbours, the nearest neighbourhood is 3 KMs away from here."

"Even before my birth, mama searched everywhere to find a job to make some money for food, but nobody helped. But, she didn't find any way to get her daily bread, so she started to

sell herself to the devilish people. With that sinful money, she brought me up. It may be God's punishment that she lost her eye eventually.

Two days before I turned eighteen, a man with a long white beard came to this house and expressed his interest in me. My poor lovely mother straight away denied that offer. He tried to bribe her by offering a huge amount of money, but she slammed the door in front of him.

That night a gang came to our house and knocked very violently at the door. They banged at the door, and we cried for help knowing that nobody would come for our rescue. We knew that this front door was not strong enough to protect us from the intruders. That was the very first time we cried for the mercy of God and we begged forgiveness for our sins.

Suddenly a miracle happened. We saw a red light flashing in front of us. At the same time, we heard a crash of loud thunder that was even enough to break our eardrums. After that incident, we couldn't hear any knock at the door. Our hearts started to beat horribly and we expected something strange like a curse going to fall upon us."

"Then we could see this door flung open and a white light came into this room." She pointed towards the front door and continued:

"Then we could see a man like an Angel...came into this room. When we saw him, our mind became peaceful like an ocean which calmed after the roaring gigantic waves invading the shore. He had worn white cassock and pellegrina, girded with a fringed white fascia and a skull cap upon his head. He had a silver chain that hung around his neck and at the end of it hung a crucifix. We could easily recognize him. It was none other than Pope Francis! His holiness blessed us with a Sign of Cross and spoke to us."

Until this time Jack was listening to Christa's narration silently, but this time he broke the silence and asked her unbelievably:

"Are you sure our dearest Papa Francisco gave you an apparition or do you think that you were dreaming?"

"No Mr. Batson, Papa Francisco gave us an apparition. His Holiness told us to turn away from our sins and come back to God. His Holiness reminded us, God is our loving Father who cries when we commit sins, and waiting patiently for the return of His prodigal children!"

"Did Papa Francisco tell you anything more?" Jack asked her.

"Yeah, His Holiness talked more while sitting on the same chair where you are sitting now."

When Jack heard this, he sprang up from the chair and looked at it with great honour and respect.

“I am fortunate to sit on the same chair where Papa Francisco sat.”

He sat on the chair again and told Christa to continue her narration like a detective, who was trying to study the reason behind a great mystery.

“His Holiness spoke to us very kindly. He was very humble and simple; His Holiness is truly a saint. His Holiness told us:

“My dear Children, don’t be afraid, I promise you, it won’t happen again. God will send His Angels to protect you from all the evils. Give yourselves under the protection of Our Lord Jesus Christ and He will help you to save your souls from all the dangers and snares of the devils. Never forget to invoke your Holy Mother Mary’s help.”

“Then we knelt down in front of him and asked God’s forgiveness for the sins that we committed in our whole life. We begged him to hear our confession and He agreed happily. After the confession and absolution, He looked upon us with tenderly love. Suddenly a light fell upon us from his eyes, and a feeling of peace overpowered our fear. He placed his hands upon our heads, drew the sign of cross and blessed us. Again, he looked upon us mercifully and started to speak:

“My dear children, you are saved. God has forgiven all your sins. Pray to God Jesus Christ for His greatest gift- the Holy Spirit. Agatha, tomorrow morning, when you go to the city, you will meet up with a man named Jack Batson, who is condemned to death by King Arthur. Go and beg the king for his release and you can save his life. He is chosen by God. The same person whose life you are going to save will help you to escape from your enemies’ clutches. So, do not be afraid.”

“Holy Father, it is not easy to change the mind of a cruel person like king Arthur. If I go and ask him to forgive and release Jack Batson... he would take my life too...I don’t mean...I am afraid to give up my life for a person who is stranger to me. What I mean is, then nobody will be here in this strange world to protect my daughter.”

“He looked upon us mercifully and smiled. His smile seemed like the smile of an Angel and it filled our hearts with tranquillity, peace and security. Then Holy Father said in a very sweet voice:

“Dear child, don’t be afraid...Why do you doubt about God’s power to save you from the clutches of your enemies. WHEN GOD IS WITH YOU, NOBODY CAN DO ANY HARM. WHEN YOU TRAVEL IN THE HANDS OF GOD, YOUR ENEMIES WILL TURN INTO YOUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS. YOU WILL HUG CRUEL LIONS, AND THEY WILL BOW IN FRONT OF YOUR FEET LIKE CATS THAT SHOW ITS AWE TOWARDS ITS MASTER. YOU WILL TOUCH SNAKES, BUT IT WON’T BITE YOU. PEOPLE MAY GIVE YOU POISON, BUT YOU WOULD DRINK IT LIKE NECTAR.”

“Then mama raised her head again and smiled. He also smiled and patted on our shoulders. Suddenly, courage overpowered our fear and mama said:

“Yes, Holy Father, I am ready to do what you said. Tomorrow I will go to the King’s palace and beg for Jack Batson’s release. Please bless us.”

“Then Papa Francisco raised his right hand, made a sign of the Cross in the air and said:

“Love, Blessings and the Power of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit will be with you always.”

“Amen.”

“After blessing us, Papa Francisco disappeared from our sight. After that apparition, we could sleep peacefully without any disturbances from the intruders and enemies. I can assure you Mr. Batson, it was the first time in our life we felt such security and safety.”

“Then, in the morning we got up early and eagerly waited for the sunrise. Thus, when the dawn came my mother went to meet the King and saved your life.”

“So, you think that God brought me here with a purpose?” Jack asked Christa while he drank the coffee and emptied his cup.

“Yes, Mr. Batson. I think so. Otherwise, Papa Francisco wouldn’t have told us to save you from the clutches of the King. Don’t you believe His Holiness’s words?”

“I believe it Christa and I know what God’s plan is!”

“What do you mean?”

“The plan is to retrieve the Holy Grail that Lord used at the time of the Last Supper.”

“You mean the Holy Grail is stolen from the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus?” Christa couldn’t believe that news.

“Yes, Christa. I am after that mystery.”

“What do you mean?” Christa asked.

“What?” Jack asked.

“To go after this mystery, are you a policeman or a secret agent?” Christa asked.

“No, I am not!”

“Then, what is your interest in this case?”

“I am a Christian and I have a moral responsibility.” Jack tried to convince her.

Their conversation broke and there was silence for a few moments.

“But, how do you know that the Holy Grail was hidden secretly in the Monastery of Holy Face of Jesus?” Jack couldn’t stop asking.

“I have read about it in Miller’s diary.”

“You mean, Miller knew about the Holy Grail and where it was kept secretly for many centuries?”

“Yes, Mr. Batson.”

“If you don’t mind, can I have a glance at that diary? I hope I will get some clues from Miller’s diary that may promote my enquiry. Perhaps, I may be able to unravel the mystery.”

Meanwhile Jack Batson and Christa continued their conversation, Agatha went to the kitchen to do some house chores.

“I am happy to give it to you Mr. Batson, but you have to promise me one thing!”

“Promise...what do you want dear girl? I can’t promise you without knowing what you ask for. If it is difficult to give you, then I will be unhappy because I can’t keep my word. My parents have advised me many times that NEVER GIVE PROMISE TO ANYONE IF I CAN’T KEEP MY WORD. So first tell me the thing, then I will decide.”

“Then, Mr. Batson, please don’t feel bad, I can’t give you that diary. If you are a person with that pride, why should I give it to you? Why can’t I use it for my own benefits?”

After Christa said all these, Jack was pondering deeply by leaning backwards, uncomfortably, in the chair. His eye brows rose and facial expression became very serious. There was a long gap before Jack broke the silence:

“Sorry for that Christa. I am ready...I am ready to give my word. Tell me whatever you want; I am ready to do anything under the sun. Even if you want my life, or burn me alive at a stake, I am ready for that. Tell me dear girl, tell me.”

“Dear Jack, don’t feel bad. I don’t want anything that causes harm to your life. I just want to be with you throughout the investigation for the Holy Grail. I wish to be the part of your quest for the vanished Holy Grail. Can you please permit me to stay beside you in this journey?”

“Yes, Christa, yes! But, remember it is not a cakewalk. If you come with me, your life may be in danger. Remember that you are the only child for your mother, and if something happens to you she would die with a broken heart.”

“I know that dear Batson. But do you know that I am a brave girl. I wish to be an adventuress like you. I don’t want to spoil my life, by just spending my entire life under this roof without achieving anything. I want to do something remarkable that would make me a celebrity, rich and happy person.”

“Yes, Christa, I can understand your pain than anyone, because we have the same wave length! Yet, I was thinking about your life and your future. If something happens to you, I have to answer to the tears of your mother. I don’t want to spoil the happiness of your mother. Even I don’t know whether I will succeed in this mission!”

“Mr. Batson, IF YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH A GREAT PLAN ALWAYS BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN SUCCEED IN IT; EVEN IF THE WHOLE WORLD ALREADY FAILED OR MAY FEAR TO DO IT. BE BRAVE TO TAKE RISKS, THEN YOU CAN REAP SUCCESS. I don’t think that we will end up in a tragedy. I do understand your worries. Please don’t consider me like a small baby. I am not a child, I am a 23 year old woman. It is my greatest ambition to do something strange which the other people fear to do. I don’t want to be a failure in my life. I want to be successful.”

“O.K. Christa, if it is your wish, I don’t want to be an obstacle in your dream. I invite you to join as my companion in my risky journey. But, before that I want you to know that I already have lost my dear brother in this journey. I don’t know whether he is alive or not? In case he is surviving somewhere we will find him somehow.”

“I am sorry about that heart-breaking news. I will be with you to find out your brother and definitely we will do it!”

“O.K. Christa, then please ask permission from your mother. If she does agree, I have no objection against your will.”

“Thank you, dear Batson!” Christa gave him a hug, and then she approached her mother who was overhearing to all these conversations from the kitchen.

“My dear child, never dream that I will give you the permission to go with him. Even if you are not afraid of the threats, I can’t give up my child for such silly reasons. I want you to be with me, I won’t...I can’t do it.” Agatha answered showing her anxiety.

“But, mama I want to go with him, please let me go. I beg you...please...” Christa requested.

Agatha didn’t give any more reply, instead she looked at her child seriously. Agatha was tapping angrily at her thighs, and she was thinking deeply about something else. She remembered her lover, the famous merchant Antonio Pedro, who left her alone. She feared that if she permits her daughter to go with Jack, she may fall in love with him. She decided that she wouldn’t allow the same disaster happening in her daughter’s life.

Agatha kept quiet for a few minutes. She was thinking about her past. She remembered how she fell in love with the Antonio Pedro and how they got separated. After they broke up she realized that she was pregnant. She hated him at that time, so she didn’t reveal it to him.

She always kept it as a secret. She feared that if she tells about it, he would kill the child or would snatch away the child from her. Until now, even after these 23 years, he didn’t know anything about his own daughter. She still can’t digest how he remain himself as a bachelor all these years. She heard from her friends that even he got proposals from beautiful girls but he denied those offers saying that he doesn’t believe girls.

Meanwhile, Jack saw a tongue of fire coming towards him through the slightly opened door and it fell upon his chest. He thought that it was some devils’ plan to burn him alive. Suddenly, as though someone knocked him, he fell down on the floor. The next moment he regained the courage and stood upon his feet. Then he started to speak, as though he got some courage from that fire.

“Dear Agatha...” Jack started to speak: “Why do you doubt about God’s own power? Why do you make your mind a mess with such tangled things? Believe in God and trust in him, remove

all the evil thoughts from your mind. You and your daughter are under the protection of your Heavenly Father, so don't be afraid, nothing will happen to you. No evil can raise its hands against you. Only good things are waiting for you. Like Jesus Christ resurrected from death, our Lord will raise you from all these problems. So, believe..."

"I agree my dear girl. I let you go with Mr. Batson!" Jack's anointed words cleared Agatha's turbulent mind and she finally gave permission for Christa.

CHAPTER-11

MILLER'S DIARY

“I shall be back soon.” Christa said while she rose from the chair. She went inside and came back with a diary in her hands. It had a red leather hardcover and all four corners were buckled with golden plates in triangle shape.

Jack looked at her flatteringly and she smiled. She handed over the diary to him and he opened it. A portrait of a young man was stuck on its first page. He had a thick brown moustache and brown curly hairs. He had a smiling face in the portrait, but his reddish eyes revealed that he was sad in his heart. Yet, his face was very attractive. His thick red lips, and glittering white teeth had hidden a demoniac, diabolic mystery.

Again Jack turned some pages and saw the date 1982 March 12 scribbled on a page. He read it as follows:

“James and I went to the house of the high priest. It was a strange house. I have never been in such a hellish house in my entire life. The house seemed like hiding some secrets inside. Its location was in a village, in the valley named Parthodas.

Parthodas was a beautiful place. It was a fully greenish country area. I could see many people working in the wheat field; there were many beautiful women and handsome men. We came across a couple who were coming from the opposite direction. We were travelling in James' car and we stopped beside them to ask the way to the high priest's house. They replied that they didn't know a person by that name. Then James explained to them that his name is Luciferos.

When they heard that name, we could see the sudden change in their facial expression which was horrible and unexpected. Suddenly their friendly face became red with anger, as though we asked them something very wrong. They stared at us for a moment and cursed us before they walked away. I couldn't understand why they behaved like that. Everything seemed like strange for me.

It was the first time, I was going to meet the high priest. Yet, I didn't know who he was. James, who was my primary school friend, told me that he had seen him five times before. When he spoke about Luciferos, you should have seen his face. James showed great awe when

he talked about Luciferos as though he was talking about the humble saint, Saint Joseph of Cupertino. Whenever he talked about Luciferos, he bowed his head to show his admiration towards that man.

James told me that, he never got an opportunity to visit his house. I remembered what James told me previousday that his greatest ambition in life was to become the high priest in their church. I asked him more about his church and the high priest, but he was not willing to answer. I felt like he was hiding something from me. I didn't dare to ask him, because sometimes he seemed like a fanatic in the matters of his church.

James and I were good friends since our childhood and we went to different colleges for our higher studies after our high school education. Yesterday, after long ten years' break, we could meet again accidentally in the city shopping mall. I was on my way back home after my travel to Eushermardero to capture a beautiful scenery which can inspire me for my next painting.

He invited me to his house and requested me to stay overnight with him before going back home. I was in a hurry to meet my parents, so I declined his offer. But, he begged again and again and finally I accepted his request. His house was located just three kilometres away from the shopping mall.

When we reached his house, I felt like trapped in one of the darkest places in the world. I got really amazed to see a house completely painted in black colour from top to bottom. Besides, most of the objects in the house were also dark in colour.

We sat on a sofa and talked about sweet memories of our childhood that we shared together. I asked him about his job and he replied me that he could become a priest in a church. When I heard it, I congratulated him for his perseverance to become a priest, because I knew that strong determination and dedication are needed to become a priest. I congratulated him for becoming a Catholic Priest, because I knew that he was coming from a Catholic family. Suddenly his face flushed with anger and he corrected me saying that, his church was more powerful than Roman Catholic Church.

Then I enquired him about the Church he belonged to. He didn't disclose me anything about it, and he seemed like secretive about his church and his priesthood.

When I asked him more about the subject, he became angry and demanded me to shut my mouth at once. I really felt very sad because it was after many years that we were meeting. In spite of this he treated me very badly like this without giving any respect.

I went there with a plan to stay with him that night, but after this incident I changed my mind and went to my room to pack up my bags to leave his house as soon as possible. I didn't dare to say goodbye forever from our friendship because it seemed like a stupid thing to talk then. My friend had changed a lot within these ten years. He was no more the same James who was my lovely companion and mate.

When I walked out with my travel bag, I could see him standing in the courtyard as though waiting for me. He said sorry for his rude behaviour and begged me to stay with him just for that night. I didn't pay attention to his request and walked towards my car, passing him. Suddenly he caught my wrist and begged again, but I denied his request. As a final attempt to appease me, he fell at my feet. I felt all his acts as ridiculous and my anger towards him slowly melted at last. Thus, finally I accepted his offer and stayed with him that night. Suddenly he transformed into a good man and started talking friendly like in our old school days. He asked me more about my paintings and my marriage. I told him that I am still a bachelor and gave more importance to my painting profession than to my family life.

Then he invited me to his church on the following day to meet up with his high priest. He told me that they were looking for a good painter to decorate their church wall. He enquired me whether I could help him in that matter. He tempted me by offering a high reward for my paintings. Finally I agreed to go with him to meet his high priest.

Staying with him at night in that strange house made me sick as if I was in a prison. But, after that incident he spoke to me very nicely and didn't give me any provocation. Yet, I had some doubts about his sudden change in the behaviour and I felt as though he was hiding something from me. So I told him that I can't go with him as my parents are waiting at home. He begged again like he did before and finally I agreed to go with him.

I couldn't understand what happened to James. Now his behaviour, his talk and everything around him seemed strange to me. My only intention of accepting his offer was to know more about the secrets of his church and the high priest.

"I am sure you would be thankful to me, for organizing a chance to meet the high priest!" James said.

That night he insisted me to go to bed early, so I went to bed before 7' O clock at night. But it was quite difficult for me to get a sound sleep as I didn't have the habit to go to bed early.

I closed my eyes, but couldn't sleep. I passed my time by rolling on the bed, finally somehow I fell into deep sleep. I didn't know how long I slept. My sleep got distracted when I heard the clink of a bell and I opened my eyes to check what happened.

I looked at the ceiling and I could see a shadow moving on it. The shadows' hands came closer to me suddenly and I sprang up from the bed and rushed through the door towards my friend's room.

When I approached his room, I overheard the howling of some people, followed by the blood freezing cry of a woman. I had moved my right hand to touch the door with an intention to knock at it. When I heard that horrifying cry, I pulled back my hand in a sudden movement, as though I got an electric shock from the door. It really made me dubious, because I knew that my friend James was a bachelor, and I haven't noticed any human beings in the house except him. So, that sound terrified me.

I was afraid that my friend was killing a woman with the help of some other people. I thought that his next prey would be me. So, I rushed downstairs to escape from that strange house. Suddenly, I heard the footsteps of someone approaching the staircase from the ground floor. Within a few seconds someone started to climb up the steps. It was pitch dark everywhere and no light was on. So it was very easy for me to hide somewhere. I walked towards my room and reached at the corner of a hall that leads to my room. I hid there safely, and peeped over at the happenings in the first floor.

I heard the footsteps more loudly and I felt like someone approaching me. But I saw someone walking towards James' room. The area in front of his room was clearly visible in the moon light that filtered through the window panes.

That figure had worn a long black jacket that touched the floor. It approached James' room; looked at every direction as though to make sure that nobody was watching or spying over it. It knocked at James' door six times like a sign to open the door and someone opened the door for him.

When the door opened, the light from inside spread everywhere. In that light, I could clearly see the face of that figure. It was a beautiful woman. I could also see the face of the person who came to open the door. I was amazed to see James standing with another man who had a thick

beard and moustache. The woman entered the room and kissed each person on their cheek as a symbol of welcome. After that, the door was closed with a creaking noise behind them.

I remembered that I didn't see anyone until I went to bed. So the person who stood beside James might have arrived only after I fell asleep. But, then I remembered that when I was trying to enter his room in the afternoon he blocked me and locked his bedroom door with a key. All his strange acts and the people who came to meet him at night raised doubts in my heart. But, I was keen to know what they were doing. Why that beautiful woman came to visit him in the midnight? Who is the other stranger in his room? These doubts burned inside my heart. I couldn't understand anything; everything appeared like a nightmare.

I got scared to go back to my room; still I was shivering with fear when thought about the gigantic shadows that approached me.... Finally, I decided to go back and stay in the room, which I felt was safer than standing there in the open hall. I realized that if I stand there, the people can easily find me and think I am spying over them. I was sure that, if James and his strange friends locate me, they won't spare me. It was a horrendous night. Everything seemed like a nightmare for me, but I wanted to find a way to escape, otherwise my life would be in danger.

I silently moved to my room and locked the door behind me. I looked around for a way to escape and finally reached the window and peeped to the courtyard. In the moonlight, I saw a few people clad in black robes and hoods, standing there in a circle. The moonlight gleamed upon them, but their faces were not visible as they had covered their faces with the hoods. They opened the front door and came inside.

After a few seconds, I could hear heavy footsteps on the staircase again. I went to the door and peeped through the keyhole. I saw them going towards James' room. I counted them...they were totally 6 people. Two people each were carrying something on their shoulders. In the moonlight, I could see what it was. They were three girls whom I could easily identify from their uncovered faces. Those three girls were in their night gowns. I got really shocked to see all these strange happenings around me.

They knocked at the door 6 times and the woman whom I saw before opened the door. They were whispering but I could clearly hear what they spoke:

"We got three girls of 15, 16 and 17 with us today." The man said.

"It is O.K. We can manage, but did you get the most important thing?" The woman asked.

“No, but my friend got one. He went to a Catholic church and luckily got it.”

“Then, where is it?”

“He asked for money for it.”

“Tell him first to give it, then we will give him the money.”

“I told him that, but he demanded to get the money first. I tried to entice him, but he didn’t yield.”

“Then give him whatever money he demanded, and get it.” The woman became impatient.

“He is in the car with other guys, waiting for the money.” The man said.

“Then what are you waiting for? Give whatever they ask and bring it. It is the time to have it!” The woman ordered.

“OK. Priestess.” He bowed and went downstairs.

Then I saw the rest of them entering into James’ room with the girls; the door got slammed behind them. Then, a feeling of intense fear conquered me and my body started to shiver. I wanted to escape from these conjurers and devils- whatever I can call them.

I know, escaping through the staircase and front door is not safe. So I opened the window and planned to go through it. I still knew that it was a dangerous attempt, because my room was in first floor, not in the ground floor. But, I preferred death than falling into the clutches of these devils.

If I climbed down through the window, I might fall onto the ground and break my legs and arms. Otherwise, it may cause to break my neck or split my head! Even if it causes to splatter my brain onto the courtyard, I don’t worry about that. Such accidental and terrible deaths are even better than the life as a slave for Satan, which culminates in my eternal death in Hell. What I wanted to do right then was to save my life from these devils....

When I opened the window, the moon was gleaming over me from the sky. In the moonlight, I could clearly see my shadow too. Even my shadow was shivering with fear. I struggled to take breath, so I got scared that my heartbeats had stopped. I checked my pulse on my right arm, but I couldn’t feel it.

I could hear the shouts and laughs of the people from James’ room. I came out through the window, holding my hands around a big steel pipe that was bolted onto the wall. That big steel

pipe gave me the hope that, I can escape soon from that hellish place. I gripped my arms and legs firmly around that steel pipe and started to climb down slowly.

While climbing down through the pipe I could clearly see James' room. Four men and five women including James were standing in a circle, clad in black robes. Many black candles were burning on the table and even on the floor.

There were chanting mantras, as though they were attending a strange terrible secretive ritual. They were dancing as well as shouting some strange words in an unknown language. I understood that they belonged to a cult that worship Satan and all other evil spirits, as I heard earlier from one of my college mates. Now I realized, what was the most important thing they had needed for their ritual. It was the Blessed Sacrament (the Holy Host) from the Catholic Church.

It was not the people or their strange acts that terrified me. When they dispersed from the circle, I could see something horrible upon the table. It was the bodies of that three girls whom I saw just a few minutes ago. James approached the table with a sword and removed their heads from their torsos.

I felt dizzy when I saw this terrible scene and I fell down onto the ground from the pipe. My whole body started to bleed; it was shivering and aching with great pain. Suddenly, I heard the stamping of the feet coming towards me. I tried to move and get up, but I failed. I closed my eyes and prepared to die. Suddenly somebody sprayed something onto my face and I lost my consciousness.

When I opened my eyes again, it was morning. I was in the same bed where I slept previous night. I could see James standing beside me. The sun light was coming inside through the windows and it was bright everywhere. I found that he was not smiling, but staring at me rudely. I was scared to look at his face and closed my eyes again. A feeling of intense fear overpowered me like in the last night. I knew that I am trapped and have no way to escape. I tried to get up but realized that my arms and legs were fastened to the bed posts....

"Please leave me alone." I begged.

When he heard this, he laughed at me and I could see his right hand as moving into his trouser pocket. He took out something from the pocket that was glistening in the burning sunlight. It was a revolver. He pressed it to my chest.

“Don’t kill me, please leave me alone.” I begged again.

“You have no right to live in this world. The hideous treacherous people like you have no right to live in this world.” He uttered these words and pointed the revolver to my forehead.

“Say good bye and see you in hell.” James barked, and his voice echoed in the room.

“I will do whatever you say. Please leave me alone.” I begged again.

“O.K. agreed. But, if you are not willing to obey me, one of the bullets in my gun will give you an answer. Then, come with me...”

There was no way to escape from his hands, so I obeyed. He untied the knots and set me free. I followed him and we went downstairs.

“Follow me.” He again ordered.

We came out from the house and he locked the door. We walked towards his car and got into it. This is how my journey started with James and now we have reached in front of the high priest’s house.

CHAPTER- 12

THE FALSE PROPHET AND THE TRUE PROPHET

We got out from the car and James pressed the calling bell. Meanwhile I was studying the house and its surroundings. It was a two-storied gigantic mansion. They had a swimming pool in the courtyard. I could see some people standing here and there holding modern guns. All of them were in black robes.

When they saw James, they bend their heads down as though seeing their commander-in - chief. Suddenly, I could see six black Great Danes were running towards me. The dogs barked and rushed towards me as though to swallow me alive. I jerked with fear, stepped back and James came forward for my rescue. Otherwise I would have died on the spot.

James showed his left hand towards them and all of a sudden those beasts stopped. The dogs knelt on the ground, bent down their heads in front of him and wagged their tails. Those terrible beasts licked his shoes and didn't move from that position for a while. All these strange things perplexed me, and I expected to see and experience some mysteries inside that house.

I heard someone's footsteps behind the main door. Somebody moved the latches and with a creaking sound the door flung open. I saw a pretty woman in black frock standing in front of us. When she saw James, she also bowed her head towards him to show respect.

"The High Priest is waiting for you." She said.

"We struggled a bit to find this place." James said like a reply.

She led us through a spiral corridor which had no end! I had never seen such a spiral corridor, because all the houses I ever visited had only straight corridors. Finally, we reached a large dining hall. It was very difficult to see the room clearly with the six tiny black candle lights burning upon the dining table.

"Sit here!" James commanded me by showing a chair beside the table.

I sat on the chair and James moved further taking one of the burning candles in his hand. He moved slowly and vanished in the darkness. When he disappeared, another beautiful woman with a black-candle light approached me and asked me in a strange voice:

“Are you the friend of the priest? You...the unfaithful creature...Satan will punish you.”

When I heard this curse from that woman I was shocked, but I ventured to reply:

“I think you misunderstood me! I am not the person you mean. I am Miller, a friend of James.”

“That is what I meant. You are the friend of the honourable priest James, but you are wrong. Why don't you worship Satan? If you trust in him, he would give you the power and wealth in this world. He will give you every worldly pleasure if you follow him.”

“I am an atheist. I believe neither in God nor in Satan. I don't believe that God and Satan exist in this world. It is just a superstition. In fact my parents are also victims of this superstition. I really feel pity for them.”

“Who told you these stupid things fool? God and Satan exist, but God is less powerful than Satan. Satan is the creator of everything, he created God too. But God disagreed to obey him. So Satan send Him down to earth and He took birth as a man named Jesus Christ. But, he didn't give respect to Satan. So Jesus Christ suffered a lot and died on the Cross.”

“Stupid woman, stop your nonsense. Even if I am an atheist, I won't believe your false story. My parents are strong believers in Jesus Christ. They taught me, Jesus Christ is the real God. He incarnated into the earth to save all the souls from their sins. He died on the Cross by dropping even the last drop of His blood and punished your stupid Satan through His crucifixion and conquered death through His resurrection. Then how you dare to utter such foolishness. Satan is an evil and liar, even if it is a story or reality. So, don't talk such nonsense anymore.” I said.

“You are thoroughly mistaken Miller. As I told you, you are a super fool. But, I warn you, if you are not giving Satan the due respect, you won't see the next morning.”

She said hoarsely revealing her anger towards me, as though I have said something wrong. Meanwhile, a terrible smile appeared on her face and I could see two sharp fangs in her mouth. That view froze my blood and I knew that my life was in danger.

“Juno, bring him here!” She commanded looking into the darkness.

She put the candle harshly upon the table and clapped her hands. I could hear the rattling of chains and wailing of a man from the darkness. The clinking of the chains approached me

more closely. Two men rushed into the room carrying big black-candles in their hands. The light from those huge candles was enough for me to see the room very vividly.

I could see someone following them behind. It was a stout man with a well-built body. His big round cruel eyes seemed like two electric bulbs. I looked at his face and a kind of hatred was spread over his face. As I looked at him, the feeling of terror almost stopped my heartbeat. Suddenly, a wind blew between us and strong smell of blood filled the room. I cursed myself the time I met James, and the decision to follow him here.

When I watched that giant beastly man, I noticed that he was carrying a heavy chain in his right hand. He was dragging that on the floor, and it was that noise I heard. Yet, I couldn't find out who the wailing man was.

Then I saw a terrible scene with my own eyes. There emerged a man on the floor from the darkness, who was severely injured from head to toe, like a crawling lizard. The other end of the chain was held by the beastly man and fastened around that injured man's neck. His whole body was bleeding. I understood that the beast man was dragging him through the floor. The wounded man had worn a rugged brown cassock with a hood. His waist was girded with a white rope. His body and cassock were completely soaked in the blood. He had an overgrown beard and a thick moustache that also were wetted in blood. His eyes were sunken in the eye socket and he was tired to the core, yet his face was shining like an Angel. I heard the whispering on his lips that made me to honour his braveness:

“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, forgive my sins and forgive these people who torture me!”

He was an amazing young man, approximately in the middle of his thirties. Suddenly, from his cassock I realized that he was a Capuchin priest, the spiritual son of St. Francis of Assisi. I had heard about St. Francis of Assisi from my religious parents. He was the son of a rich merchant but gave up all worldly pleasures for Jesus Christ. I don't like religion and religious studies, so I don't care about the stories of the saints.

My parents used to go to the church every day, because they were traditional orthodox Catholics. I used to go with them when I was a child, but not regularly like them. I was staying in a boarding school until I was a fifth-year student and gradually I lost my faith in God.

When I went home for holidays, my parents told me to go with them for attending Holy Mass. Even though they were religious, they never insisted me to go with them. They gave me enough freedom to do what I wished, because I was their lone child. Until I reached high school, I was close to my parents. During those days in order to make them happy, sometimes I joined them in the prayer hall when they recited the Rosary. Sometimes, I tried to pray “Our Father in Heaven” and “Hail Mary”.

When I reached high school, I met with a beautiful girl, Kate. She was very bubbly and loved me very much. I also loved her. She was a staunch atheist and her parents too. She told me, God and Satan don’t exist in this world. Her influence made me a non-believer.

When I realized that the severely wounded man was a priest, I started laughing within. If it was an ordinary human being I would have felt sympathy for him. But it is a Catholic priest. I felt angry towards him, because it is the clergy who lead the believers through the falsehood of God’s existence.

They teach that God is Our Father, so we can call him Father. Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and those who believe in him will have eternal life. Holy Spirit will help us to lead a sinless life to reach in Heaven. God allows sufferings in our life for our purification, to make us saints. Jesus Christ gave us the Holy Spirit, to help us in our every need of life. If you are anointed by the Holy Spirit, you will get the power to tackle temptation and fight against the evil spirits. All these teachings of the Catholic church and its clergy still irritate me.

“Do you see this man? He is Fr. Damian, a Capuchin friar.” The beastly man told me and continued:

“He told us, he is one of the humble servants of the Lord. Whenever we beat him he said, he already forgave us in the name of his Lord Jesus Christ. How stupid he is!”

When I heard this, I was really shocked and amazed about the power of forgiveness. How a man could forgive his enemy. It is a strange thing for me. If I were in his place, I would have killed my enemy. Even if I am helpless to do something under this cruel torture, at least I would have cursed him in my heart. But this priest, I don’t know who gave him such a strong will power and tolerance, to forgive his enemies when they brutally torture him. When I was pondering about this, that priest smiled at me and started to speak, as though he understood what was going through my mind:

“Dear brother Miller, why are you thinking doubtfully about this? Jesus blessed me to become a martyr, so I am very happy to undergo these sufferings patiently. Now I am seeing the Crown of Glory that Jesus is going to give me today in Heaven. Do you still think, my Lord Jesus Christ is a helpless God to remove all these pains away from me? Never doubt about God’s power. I will die soon, but I am very happy now, because today I am going to Heaven to meet my Lord Jesus Christ to receive my eternal glory. My dear brother, believe in Jesus Christ and you will have eternal life. I promise you.”

Fr. Damian’s heart breaking words echoed in my ears like a thunder. At the same time, a lightning struck my heart. I couldn’t talk or move for a few moments. When we heard these words, the beastly man became angry. He grabbed an iron rod studded with nails from the floor and started to beat Fr. Damian mercilessly, from head to toe. Blood started gushing out from all parts of his body. Even during these savage tortures, he was very courageous to talk:

“Dear Miller, before I die I want to tell you one more thing. Don’t believe the words of that woman. Satan is not the creator of God. Satan is just a creature like all the other creatures. God is the creator of all living and non-living things in this universe, and we are under his mercy.”

“Some people misunderstand the theology behind God’s love. Never complain or judge that God is the reason behind all the sins that you have done in your life. God never created Satan. God created only Angels. Only because of their own pride and disobedience, three groups of Angels were cast down from Heaven to Hell and became evil spirits. Now they are wandering about the world seeking the ruin and destruction of souls, whom God created in his own image. God has given us the fortune to become His own children by believing in Jesus Christ, who is His only begotten Son.”

The priest stopped for a moment and smiled at me. I was looking sadly at him. I couldn’t speak, but I could observe the face of the priest, which was shining like an Angel who just came down from Heaven. His eyes were sparkling like a wild fire. When those things happened, I enjoyed peace within.

“Take him and crucify him like his God Jesus Christ.” The cruel woman ordered to the beastly man who was torturing him.

The beastly man came forward, snatched Father Damian on his right wrist and dragged him towards the door. I couldn’t control my feelings. I sprang up from the place where I stood and chased that beastly man. Meanwhile, I could grab one candle stick which was very heavy and

made of iron. I raised the candle stick and gave a smash at the beastly man's head from behind. The very next moment, he fell down onto floor with a scream like a huge building that crashed during an earthquake.

Somebody opened the windows and everything around me became visible. I could see that beastly man's head was bleeding. Suddenly, another tall fat man appeared from the corridor. His teeth and nails were sharp like that of a devil. He had worn a black robe, and an upside down cross was hanging upon his chest. His beard and moustache were very thick and dark. I looked into his fearful reddish eyes which resembled to that of a devil came from hell. In a hoarse voice, he started to swear at me:

"Who are you hellish creature? How dare you to intrude into my territory and attack my servants? I will teach you a lesson."

Before completing his words, he started smashing me with an iron rod which he grabbed from the desk. I fell down and whined...After a while, I struggled to open my eyes, and I found the man who knocked me down still standing beside me. Gradually I lost my consciousness and his image faded out from my eyes.

When I opened my eyes again, I was lying beside Father Damian, and my whole body was bleeding like his. I tried to move my limbs, but I couldn't. There was pain throughout my body. Suddenly, I recognized someone standing beside me. I tried hard to raise up my bleeding head to look at that person. It was the same cruel man who smashed me down. When I looked at his face he sneered at me like a hellish creature. He tapped the iron rod on the floor and made a sound. That sound echoed everywhere in the room.

"What the hell do you think you are?" He asked me scornfully.

A mixed feeling of hatred, anger and fear conquered my heart. I wished to cull him as soon as possible. At the same time I knew that I am helpless. I pledged to take revenge on him if I can escape from that hell. I tried to abuse him using obscene words, but voice didn't come out from my mouth, as though my tongue sank into my throat. He kicked Fr. Damian who was lying alongside me, and the priest moaned with pain. My blood boiled with rage and I wished to finish that hellish man at once.

"You son of Satan, who are you to kill this Godly man? May God be your judge. Given a chance, I will show you how a devil like you are going to suffer." I yelled at him and he beat

me mercilessly like a cruel master beating his dog. I wished for the first time, if I could salvage that poor priest from this hell.

“High priest, we have a visitor!” Somebody called him from outside. Then I realized that, it was the same man whom James called reverently ‘High Priest’.

The cruel man went outside by leaving us in the room. I realized in the dim candle light that, we were the only people left in that dark room.

“Father...father!” I called Father Damian.

He opened his eyes and tried to smile. His whole body was shivering with cold and pain.

“My dear child, don’t be afraid. They can do harm only to our body, not our soul. Do you know why they kidnapped me and took me here. Their ulterior motive is to rob the Holy Grail and conquer this world. But, it is not going to happen. I have hidden it secretly and no words will come out from my mouth even at the expense of my life. They could steal it first, but, by God’s grace I recovered it and hid it somewhere. Can I believe you my dear child?”

“Yes, Father, you can trust me fully!” I started crying emotionally.

“Then I shall tell you where it is. Before I die, I want to ensure that it won’t fall into the wrong hands again. I trust you.” Father Damian slowly closed his eyes for a while.

“I promise you father. I was an atheist, but your sufferings and your forgiveness opened my eyes.... You changed my life upside down.... Now, I believe in Jesus Christ and proclaim that He is the true God. Amen...But... still I am helpless Father. I don’t know how to save your life, and escape from this trap!”

“Don’t worry, my child. If you are a true follower of Jesus Christ, you have to sacrifice a lot in this world. Your enemies may torture you or kill you. But, remember His words: Forgive your enemies and love them Give your life for your friends... I am very happy my dear child; I obeyed what my Lord taught me. Now I can die in peace.” Fr. Damian continued:

“My dear child, don’t worry about my life. I will die soon, and I can see where I will be going. Today, Jesus is going to give me eternal glory in Heaven. When I am in Heaven I will pray for you to give you the strength to bear every pain. You will find a way to escape from here. Can you please carry my body to the monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus at Eccopodochia, and hand over to my brethren living in that monastery? Now, I am 36. I was ordained as a priest on

my 30th birthday and could serve the Lord and his people for nearly six years. Now my term is over. Thank you Jesus for all the blessings you showered on me.”

Then, Fr. Damian closed his eyes and breathed heavily. As he took breath his chest was raising up and falling down. He was too tired and totally exhausted, yet an angelic smile appeared on his face. Now the only voice I could hear was Fr. Damian’s deep breath. I closed my eyes and listened carefully. Fr. Damian’s breath reverberated in my ears and suddenly it stopped!

“But father, I won’t let you die in front of me like a stranger!” I shook his motionless body and started to cry and tears rolled down from my eyes. My tears and blood soaked the floor.

“Dear child!” Father slowly opened his eyes, touched my face with his right hand and whispered:

“Are you afraid to die?” He asked while panting.

“No, father, not more!” I answered.

“Don’t worry.”

Then he took something from his inner pocket and gave it to me. It was a torn paper and I couldn’t understand why he gave it to me.

“What is it father?” I asked eagerly.

“It is a piece of paper, keep it secretly. This will guide the right person to the Holy Grail. Then he will recover it from that hidden place, because only HE can access that place which is protected. Then he will hand over it to the Holy Father.”

I wished to open that paper and read the content inside. I was afraid to open because I realized that it was not the safe place to do it. So, I put it safely inside my pants’ secret pocket. But, I didn’t understand about whom he was mentioning as the right person. So I asked him:

“Father, who is that right person?”

“The man from the South with dark hair and dark eyes, who recites Rosary all the time.” He whispered again.

I felt like he was talking about a riddle, so I asked him again:

“Father, I didn’t understand. Who is that? Is it me?” I thought he was talking unconsciously.

“No, dear child... you are just a mediator, like me. But as I told you, a man from the south who was anointed by the Holy Spirit will come to recover it.”

“O.K. Father, I am ready to do whatever you wish me to do.... But, how can I give it to him.?”

“You can’t meet him. You will die as a martyr within a few days. He will find out this paper from where it is, at that time. My dear child, it is the time for me to go to Heaven. As I told you before, when I am there I will pray for you. Holy Trinity one God, Holy Mary, St. Joseph, all Angels, all Saints and all Holy Souls in Purgatory have come to take me to Heaven.”

When he said these words, a white light filled the room. As I saw this, my mind filled with joy and peace. I couldn’t understand what was happening around me. At the very moment I transformed myself and forgave all the people who tortured me.

“Get up and walk. This is the time!” I heard a voice from somewhere.

At the next moment, I realized that I was standing on the floor carrying Father Damian in my arms. I found a door opened in front of me. I rushed and passed through that door. Suddenly, I felt like I was in hell because I could see the high priest, James and other people standing in the courtyard. They also saw me. As I saw them, I jerked and moved backward.

“Don’t be afraid, move forward!” A voice commanded to me.

Suddenly, Luciferos-the high priest, James, their security guards and all the others fell down as though somebody knocked them down.

“Thank you, Jesus!” I said this unknowingly.... I really got astounded of the miracle that happened in front of my eyes.

I galloped further, but surprised to realize that I wasn’t in their courtyard; instead, I was standing on a mud path in a strange place, that was covered with trees on both sides. Still, Father Damian was lying in my arms. I knelt, laid him down on the roadside and shook him to wake him up. He didn’t give any reply. I checked his breath and pulse, but it was too late. Everything had finished- “another martyr for Jesus Christ”!

CHAPTER-13

THE MONASTERY OF HOLY FACE OF JESUS

I started to cry, my tears mixed with blood, and rolled down into Fr. Damian's cassock. Suddenly, somebody touched on my shoulder and I screamed with fear. I thought that it would be Luciferos, the high priest. Somehow, I regained my courage and turned back. I saw a young man wearing a cow boy hat, torn pants and rugged shirt standing behind me. From his clothes, I could identify him as a farmer.

"My God, what happened to Fr. Damian?" He screamed as he saw Father Damian's corpse.

"Do.... You... know...him? Some...body.... Killed... him!" Somehow, I answered.

My vision got blurred with tears, and I started to weep again.

"Father, father...please open your eyes, your Andrew is here father... Do you remember father? You gave back life to my dead son... Please speak father...please..." He also started to cry.

We cried for a while then wiped away our tears.

"Which is this place?" I asked him.

"Don't you know this place?" He stared at me, as though I was lying to him.

"To be frank with you...I don't know this place. I don't know even how I reached here!"

"Tell me, who did this...I want to take revenge on them." His tone changed.

"I shall tell you everything. Before that, please take me to the Monastery of Holy Face of Jesus in Eccopodochia."

"Sure sir, please wait... I shall be back soon." He walked and disappeared.

After a few minutes, I saw a car coming towards me. It was followed by many other cars, and a crowd, like in a procession.

"Fr. Damian, Fr. Damian!" Everyone was screaming the same name. I saw many people were sobbing among the crowd.

Some people came towards me, took Fr. Damian's body, and laid it at the back seat of a car. The procession resumed and moved forward. Meanwhile, some other people came and took me in another car. I couldn't understand, who those people were and what their intention was. If they were going to do some harm to me, I was helpless. Only God can save me. I was totally exhausted and wounded. Gradually I fell into a deep sleep....

When I opened my eyes again, I realized that the car was ascending a steep road. I could see a huge abyss at the left side of the road. But the driver didn't seem to be worried about it. He stamped on the accelerator and climbed the hill to reach a level muddy road with pine trees on both sides. The tree branches were dancing in the wind. I could see a large castle, made completely of strong black granites standing in front of me. It reminded me of the castles which I read in the fairy tales. We passed the gate and entered the courtyard.

There I saw some monks walking in garden and reciting Rosary. When the car and the procession reached the courtyard of the castle, all of the monks raised their heads and looked at us.

Among them I saw an old monk who was a hunchback. He held a wooden walking stick on his right hand to support his body. He came forward and the rest of the monks trailed him like the flock following their shepherd.

"Father, father!" Andrew (the same man whom I met first) knelt down on his knees, and showed respect to that old monk.

"Father Jerome...Fr. Damian was killed by someone!" Andrew struggled to complete these words and started to weep by covering his face with hands.

"I won't believe that...I won't believe that..." That old monk seemed like shocked to hear that terrible news.

Still I was sitting in the car. Time lapsed...I felt like nobody was bothering me. I was very tired and wished to lie down that moment as my whole body was paining and started bleeding again. I couldn't control my pain, so I started to cry. Meanwhile, four people came and removed Fr. Damian's corpse from it. They carried his body to the monastery and the crowd followed them.

I thought, I was going to die now, way before Father Damian's prophesied time. So, I decided to read the paper that Father Damian had given me. I opened it carefully making sure

that nobody was watching me. I saw some words written in Latin. I was not an expert in Latin language, yet, I could read it. I read the following words:

“Who made it

The one who gifted

Who used it

The one who saved us

Who took it

The Alpha in shepherd’s skin

Who dug it

The one who die for it

Who get it

The one from South

How to get it

Walk to the face of the Lord

Where to find it

In the place of our end

Where is it

Where our very first parents sleep.”

These were the last words in Miller’s diary. Jack Batson finished the diary and looked at Christa and Agatha. They were thinking deeply about it.

CHAPTER- 14

THE LIBRARY ARCHIVES

Time ran out hastily and it was thick dark outside. While Jack Batson finished the diary, he heard somebody's footsteps outside. It came near and near and finally stopped in front of the main door. The very next moment, they could hear hard blows on the door. Agatha and Christa got scared and moved backwards.

Without rethinking Jack rushed towards the door and opened it angrily. Suddenly he got a smash on his head from behind. Before losing his consciousness, he turned back and looked. He couldn't believe his eyes... It was Agatha who did it. He fell down on the floor.

"You cheated me, I will kill you. You cheated me, I will kill you...." While losing his consciousness, he mumbled again and again.

Suddenly someone sprinkled water on his face and he opened his eyes. He saw Matt standing in front of him holding a bucket in his hand. He couldn't believe his eyes.

"Oh, Matt, I can't believe this! Tell me how could you escape from those hungry alligators and crocodiles?"

"What happened to you Jack? What are you talking about? Are you crazy? I don't understand what you are speaking!"

"Don't lie, Matt. Santa Claus came to our home and we followed him upto Israel. But at the end of the journey we fell into the clutches of the enemies. Then two devilish people threw us into the river to feed the alligators. I saw you drowning in the water. After that horrible incident, we got separated. I escaped and again a woman named Agatha attacked me, but somehow I escaped and reached home back." Jack got annoyed at Matt as he didn't seem like trusting him.

"Don't talk nonsense, Jack! We were in our own home last night, and we didn't meet any Santa Claus. Do you remember what happened yesterday? During the dinner, you showed us a cheque being the fees for your case investigation which you got from Father John of the Cross. Then, all of us went to bed. Today morning you were sleeping when I came into your room. You were dreaming and yelling that you would kill someone. So I took this bucket of water from the washroom and splashed on your face. That's what happened."

"So, you think it is a dream!" Jack asked.

“Why not? Are you crazy bro in this early morning? I think you have delirium!” Matt laughed at him as though he was not believing Jack’s story.

When Jack understood that his brother was not prepared to believe him, he became disappointed. He got up from the floor and took his towel to wipe his body. He went to the bathroom, changed his wet clothes and returned to the bedroom.

As he came out from the bathroom, he found a red diary lying on the floor. He bent down and grabbed it. With his shivering hands, he opened it. It was Miller’s Diary. Jack had no doubt about it. He turned every page and glanced over it. It was the same diary. It wasn’t an illusion, it is the same diary. Jack gave it to Matt and Matt read the whole diary.

“Now what do you think?” Jack asked.

“I don’t know Jack, I am confused... What should I say to you? Should we ask anyone else?”

“No, Matt! Now, I understand everything. I shall explain it to you.” Jack said and sat on the bed.

Matt sat beside Jack and looked at him curiously to know what he was going to speak.

“Jack, I think it was a premonition?” Matt opined.

“No, Matt it isn’t. It should be a premonition if Miller’s diary was not here. I know some incidents, where the people get forewarnings before their own death, or the death of someone related to them. But, it is not like that. I went to another world, which is hidden in the history. I saw and experienced the things from the past. I lived in that world which was already a history.”

“But, you told me, I was also with you during your journey. Then, why couldn’t I experience the same things?” Matt asked.

“It was not you, it was someone else. Somebody disguised as you to accompany me. I don’t understand who that was and what his intention was. But I am hundred percent sure that somebody was with me, when I visited that historic world. Might have been a devil who wanted to trap me! I don’t know... but only thing I have here as evidence is Miller’s Diary, which is right here in front of us.”

“I shall be back soon!” Matt said and went outside.

“What Matt, what happened?” Jack asked.

Instead of giving an answer to this question, Matt walked out from the room. He came back within a few minutes, with a newspaper clutched in his hand.

“Please read this.” Matt said and handed over that paper.

Jack grabbed and looked at the first page of the paper. It was an evening edition of Kretton newspaper, the most subscribed newspaper in Billston. While reading the news, he jumped from the bed as though got shocked, and stood on the floor.

“Is it true, Matt, is it true?” He asked seriously.

“Yes Jack, it is true... but I don’t know how Miller knew about this incident and wrote diary about it?”

“Thank you Matt for giving me this information. Now, I got the clue.”

“So, what is your next step to find out the Holy Grail?” Matt asked eagerly to know more about his plan.

“I want to find out a way. Still, I don’t know what to do... Matt, I am going to the library. I want to refer some books related to this subject. If someone calls me, tell them that I am busy and take a message.” Jack Batson said.

While walking into his home library, Jack Batson was thinking deeply about the incidents he read in the newspaper. As he entered the library he felt like a rat being trapped. He glanced over the book shelves and found “Don’t touch only to see” signboard in one of the ancient book sections. Similarly, he found different signboards indicating different subjects including ‘Catholic Church’.

He took out one book from the Catholic Church collection and turned its pages. It was in Latin language. The name of the book was ‘In Historia Ecclesiae Et Ejus Religionis Catholicae, Qui Thesaurum’, which means ‘The History of Catholic Church and its Religious Treasures.’ It was a handwritten manuscript from 14th century. So, he handled it very carefully. Suddenly his eyes stopped at a page and read it:

The Holy Grail

Holy Grail used by our Lord Jesus Christ is known as one of the most beautiful and valuable treasures belonging to the Catholic Church. When one Pope dies, another Pope has the authority to inherit the Holy Grail. The Holy Father keep the Holy Grail in Rome due to the security reasons. But the Pope can decide whether he wants to keep it inside Rome or in some other places. Some Popes kept the Holy Grail in their own room to safeguard it from all types of dangers. After the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Pope at that time- His Holiness Gregory 9th - handed over it to the Franciscan Order as a gift, because of his reverence towards their seraphic father St. Francis. This is how, the Franciscan friars in the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus at Eccopodochia inherited the Holy Grail.

Some cults and the enemies of the Church have tried many times to attack the monastery to rob it, but they failed in their attempts. Now, it is kept in a hidden place, somewhere in the monastery.

Some enemies of the Church have entered the clergy, like the wolves in the sheep's skins, to find out the Holy Grail. From the trustworthy sources it was heard that, these satanic cults' ultimate goal is destroying the Church and the whole world, and make it under Satan. They believe that, who keeps the Holy Grail can conquer this world. That's the reason why they are behind it. They strongly believe that the Holy Grail will help them to executive their strategy. Beware of the fallen angels and their messengers."

Jack stopped reading and he became deeply concerned after reading the last paragraph. He felt like his soul was requesting him to find out and protect the Holy Grail. He put back that book safely, and searched for other books. He found yet another book from the shelf. Its name was "The Church and its Anti Apostles". He read the following paragraphs:

(paragraph 5 onwards):

As discussed above, the main issue the Church currently faces is the wolves in the priesthood. The Church is our mother. But have you heard the story about the man who killed his own mother to satisfy his wife? Some children of the church are not different. Pity on the people who stand against their own Mother Church, to destroy the unity and happiness in their own family.

Some enemies have reigned into the Church hierarchy by disguising themselves as priests and they lead the believers to hell by their wrong teachings. As the Lord said, during the end of time, the false prophets will surge from different parts of the world. Now, it is the time, we have no much time to waste. Lead a prayerful life, we have to suffer a lot, but trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, and Lord will give you the power to overcome all these troubles.

In the history, we can see the examples of different heresies, cults and devil worshippers that tried to destroy the Church. But, in the blood of the martyrs, the Church sprouted out and expanded to every place in the world.

In the northern hemisphere, situates the headquarters of a big cult. Their organizational name is 'Children of Hell' (C.O.H). Their main goal is to destroy the Catholic Church by choosing the best members among them, and sending them to the Catholic Priesthood.

Before they become the members of the Catholic Church, they study for one year about the Church and ways to destroy it. Then, they join in a Catholic Church as its members. Some of them work as laymen among the people to destroy their faith. But the best candidates join into the seminary by showing their interest in priesthood.

After becoming priests their main goal is to lead the believers through the wrong path. They work hard to destroy the Church. Now, a few Children Of Hell cult members could enter into Priesthood; So beware of them."

Jack closed the book and took a notebook and pen from his coat pocket. He wrote down some notes and put it back. His next move was to get more knowledge about *Children Of Hell*. He searched among books and found out another book. Its name was "The cults in the History".

"Page234, Chapter-66:

Children of Hell: The Cult or Group of People Possessed by Demons

Many cults in the history had their own rituals through which they attracted the people to their group. They sent their smartest members into the seminaries to join priesthood. Such people join the seminary and become priests. The leader of Children of Hell cult is known as Lucifer. He is making plans with other group leaders to defeat the church. They are fighting not just against Christianity, but against all the religions to give bad images about every religion in the world.

But their main enemy is the Catholic Church. I don't need to say why it is. Because you already know the reason. In fact, the Children of Hell are a group of people possessed by demons and all the evil spirits. Many of its members had come to the main streams of the society, to destroy the unity among the people who believe in different religions. The Church teaches that all the people are the children of God, without considering either they are Catholic or belong to other Churches or other religions. The Church teaches that, all human beings are equal in the eyes of God, because all are God's own children.

Since their cult's beginning, the C.O.H members had raised many allegations against Lord's 'God image'. One of the biggest heresy they used to misguide the believers was the following. Jesus Christ is just a human being, He was married to Mary Magdalena and they had children. Hereby I warn you, whoever say this or teach this heresy is possessed by many devils. One day, their own false words will judge them, and they will end up in Hell with their own pride and heresy. So, whoever teaches these falsehoods is the child of Satan."

Jack Batson closed the book, and sat on a chair as exhausted. The strong words in the book had shocked him. Yet, with this information, he wasn't fully satisfied. He was searching for a specific book. He searched everywhere, and finally he found the book, that he was searching. He opened the book and turned its pages. Finally, he stopped and looked into a specific page. His heart started throbbing and he read the words loudly. The book's name was "Signs and Symbols of Devils, Witches and Cults:

"page 57, Chapter 8

(paragraph 3 onwards):

Satan worshippers, cults, witches and wizards are using different mantras and cursed materials, at the time of their rituals -to symbolize their honour, obedience and respect towards the evil spirits. They use different objects and chants to surrender themselves under the protection Satan and his evil spirits. Thus, they are honoured to be called as the ‘Slaves of Satan’ and all the evil spirits.

It is still a mystery that, how those people can surrender themselves to Satan, the biggest liar. Satan never loved any human being, he always considers them as his own enemies and slaves. How a slave can love his master, and how a master can love his slave? On the other side, God considers every human being as his own children. Don’t be a fool. Love your Heavenly Father and hate the liar who treats you as slaves.

Jesus Christ has told, Satan is a liar and is the father of lies. Satan tries to destroy the happiness in every human beings’ lives. Satan is jealous of the human beings, because the creator of the universe calls them His own children. Don’t give your life to Satan, hate him and keep him away and surrender your life to your Heavenly Father. Then your Heavenly Father will create miracles in your life. When you are with God, Satan won’t dare to touch you and your dear ones.”

Then he turned away the pages and finally reached on

Page 234, paragraph 6 of Chapter 26: “Religious symbols and Objects of Children Of Hell

The leaders of the Children Of Hell (C.O.H) use different religious objects as the symbol of their authority, like the bishops and other superior leaders of the Church using crosiers. But the symbols are totally different from that of the church. The following are the positions and authority sceptre they are using:

- The highest leader is known as Lucifer and he uses the staff with Satan’s head at the top.
- Second highest leader is known as Beelzebub and he uses the staff with snake’s head.
- Third one is Baal and uses the staff with lion’s head.
- Abaddon uses the staff with dragon’s head.
- Mammon uses the staff with a skull at the top.
- Belphegor uses the staff with upside down cross and a snake around it.
- Asmodeus uses the staff with crocodile’s head.”

When Jack finished reading, he closed the book and took down the notes in his book. He referred other information from internet too. He has gotten enough information about the case he was going to investigate.

He compiled all the information and reports about the disappearance of the Holy Grail. He got convinced that the enemy is not just an ordinary person who can be dealt with easily. He calculated different options and finally conceived an action plan in his mind to move further and retrieve the Holy Grail...Suddenly, the library door flung open and someone entered the library!

CHAPTER- 15

THE MAN WITH THE WALKING STICK

It was Nova, Jack's sweet heart. She was very happy to meet him in the library, because she knew that, nobody would come there to interrupt their privacy.

"My sweet Jack, what are you reading now? What is the progress in your adventure?" Nova asked.

Her beautiful eyes were gleaming and her attractive smile appeared on her face as usual. Jack narrated every incident happened to him. He gave her Miller's diary to read. After that she took the newspaper and read:

"Murder in the Monastery and the Man with a Walking Stick"

That was the headline of the news. While Nova read the news, the incidents appeared in her mind as if she was watching a movie.

Eccopodochia: Last night, a series of disasters happened in some areas of Eccopodochia. The famous monk Fr. Damian was seen dead in the compound of the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus. It was Father Abbot of the monastery- Fr. Jerome, who first saw his dead body. Then he called other friars for help. All friars rushed into the scene and saw the brutally murdered body of the monk. Meanwhile, the cook in the monastery rang the church bells to call the people in the parish. Within 15 minutes every parishioner gathered on the site to see what happened in the monastery.

Someone called the police, and the cops arrived at the spot within 5 minutes. It was very difficult for the police to reach beside the victims' body because of the tightly packed large crowd. So, they called for more force, and the special task force came and took control over the place.

Police removed Fr. Damian's body for post-mortem. Further investigation was ordered by the superiors which would be conducted by Inspector Davidson, who was one of the friends of Fr. Damian.

When Inspector Davidson arrived along with the finger print expert in the monastery, he became very emotional. He told the media that, Fr. Damian's loss is not only a personal loss

for him but also for the community in general. He also said that the culprits behind this heinous action will be brought before the law, whoever they might be.

Davidson scrupulously inspected the garden where the body was lying. He checked the body and the garden's surroundings and finally stopped in front of a cave. He got one stick from there. It was a strong wooden stick, with a lion's head carved on the top. He checked it very carefully and found some scratches on the lion's head.

"What is this?" Inspector Davidson yelled.

One of the friars who accompanied him enquired:

"What is it, Davidson?"

"Father, please look at this stick." Davidson showed that stick to the friar.

Upon that stick, the friar could notice some thick blood stains. When the friar saw that he was shocked and stared at Davidson.

"Father Martin, do you have any idea about the owner of this stick?"

"I don't know Davidson. The only friar using walking stick in the monastery is Fr. Jerome, but, I can assure you that this doesn't belong to him, his stick is different to this."

"Are you sure, Father?" Davidson asked as though he couldn't believe it.

"Certainly. You can ask anyone in the monastery about it. They will say the same thing. Anyway, if you don't mind, I can arrange a meeting for you with other friars and you can talk to them too."

"Thank you, father, that is also very important. Thank you for your cooperation."

So Fr. Martin took him to other friars, and every friar gathered in the dining hall to meet with Inspector Davidson. He studied the faces of every friar through his eagle eyes. Everyone was very sad about the misfortune that happened to their most lovely brethren.

"Dear fathers, can I ask you some questions?" Inspector enquired.

"Certainly, you can." Fr. Jerome answered on behalf of all the friars gathered there, because he was the Abbot in that community.

"How many people among you are using walking sticks?" Davidson asked first question and looked at everyone separately, especially towards the Abbot.

“All of the friars in our community are strong and healthy...except one...that is me...so...I am the only one using walking stick.” Fr. Jerome replied humbly.

“So, father!” Inspector Davidson showed that walking stick (which he discovered from the garden) towards everyone and continued:

“So, tell me the truth? Who is the owner of this walking stick? Father Martin told me, it belongs to someone else. But, Father Jerome I can assert that this is yours.”

“Yes, Davidson, it is mine. From where did you get this? I think, I missed it somewhere and I was looking for this for many days.”

“So, Fr. Martin was lying to protect you!” Davidson looked sharply at Fr. Martin.

“No, Inspector, no. It belongs to me, but I never used it outside. I was keeping it with me in my room, because it is made of rose wood, which means it is a luxurious thing. When we become the members of our Congregation, we are taking the vow of poverty with chastity and obedience. So, we are not permitted to use expensive goods. If I am true priest, I am bound to obey that rule. So, I reserved it in my room to give it to an old man, who used to come to the Church every day. But, after I got this, I couldn’t meet him. That’s why I was keeping it with me. I didn’t buy it, it was gifted to me by ‘the Man with the Walking stick’.”

“Who?”

“The Man with the Walking stick.” Fr. Jerome whispered again.

“Who is that? I never heard such a strange name for a human being?” Davidson handed over that stick to a cop who came with the case file.

“Thanks mate...” Davidson said and the policeman left.

“It is the name that people used to call him.” Fr. Jerome said.

“So, what is his real name?” Davidson asked again.

“Nobody knows Inspector!”

“So, if you don’t know anything about him, why did you accept his gift?”

“Dear Inspector, we are friars, not business men. So, whatever people offers with love, we have to accept that. After accepting the donations, we use it for the growth of the people, especially for the people living in poor conditions or those who are jobless or sick.” Fr. Jerome replied.

“But Father, you have to be very careful about the dangers that you are inviting into your life through the strangers’ gifts.”

“Inspector, we are covered under God’s protection. If God has a plan to let us go through sufferings to purify us from our sins, he would use even devils and our enemies as His channel for our purification. It doesn’t mean that God has abandoned us. It means that God loves us more than everything in the universe and He desires our own sanctity. None of us are afraid of anything in this world. IF THE WHOLE WORLD COME AGAINST ONE MAN AND IF GOD STANDS WITH HIM, NOBODY CAN TOUCH HIM, BECAUSE THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE IS WITH HIM. Then the people come to destroy that person would taste failure from God’s hands.”

“I can understand you father. You are right, father, you are right. But, I was just warning you. Could you please tell me more about that person?” Inspector Davidson requested.

“The Man with the Walking Stick, started to come here since 1st May, last year.”

“How do you remember that date clearly?”

“Because, it was the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker. He came to visit us in the friary after the Mass and donated good amount of money to share with the needy. We get many donations from different people, but I remember him because of the enormous amount that he donated us. It was one million Hostos.”

“One Million Hostos!” Davidson opened his mouth unbelievably.

“Yes, after that every day he visited us in the monastery until yesterday.”

“So, you mean he didn’t come today!”

“You are right inspector!”

“So, what is his schedule for the daily visit?” Inspector asked.

“Since 1st May he used to come here around 6:30 AM to attend the morning Holy Mass. And yesterday, before he left the monastery, he donated another three hundred thousand Hostos to the St. Vincent De Paul Society.”

“Vow Father, you mean he is a charity man! Is he a wealthy man to donate such a huge amount of money to the monastery and St. Vincent De Paul Society? Can you please tell me more about him; I mean his characters and features?”

He was a tall but lean man. He had dark skin and blue eyes. He had a tattoo on his left hand depicting a lion's head, and under it tattooed the letters C.O.H. I don't know what does that mean. He was in his early 70's, and used a walking stick similar to this. He was not open and didn't have the interest to converse with others. So we couldn't ask him about his family and whereabouts. The only thing we knew about him is that he was a regular visitor to this monastery."

When he donated the money, didn't you write the receipt? So, what was the name you put on it?"

"When the treasurer asked his name, he told him to put the name- 'The Man with the Walking Stick' on it. The treasurer asked, was it his real name. Then he replied that it is how he wished to be called."

Fr. Jerome answered all the questions promptly and the Inspector was satisfied with his answers. After that, Inspector Davidson seemed like thinking about something. Then suddenly his facial expressions changed and a smile appeared on his face.

"What happened Inspector?" Fr. Jerome asked him.

"I got the clue Father... Now I know who was the culprit." By saying that Inspector Davidson left the monastery.

On the same day, around 11' O clock at night, the patrolling police found Inspector Davidson's dead body on the road side at Arthurton. His body was severely wounded like the body of Father Damian. Somebody had given him a blow to his head splitting his skull and letting the brain and blood coming out. After the death of the Inspector Davidson, the mystery surrounded the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus continued as concealed. The Police couldn't find out 'the walking stick', which the inspector had taken away with him during the case investigation. The officials said that, he couldn't submit the walking stick (which believed to be the walking stick of the perpetrator) to the Police Headquarters. Thus along with these murders of two important persons, the disappearance of the walking stick made the case more complex."

Nova finished the news and gave back the newspaper. Jack was pondering about the news to extract some clues. She looked at him and asked eagerly to know more:

"So, my dear what is your conclusion from this?"

“My dear girl, I could derive certain things from this. The first thing is, Father Damian had safely hidden the Holy Grail before he was killed. And from the walking stick used by that strange old man, we can conclude one thing. He must be the man who is otherwise called Baal, the third highest authority in the ‘Children Of Hell’ cult. Did the last words in Miller’s diary strike you. It seemed like a riddle. Am I right?”

“Yes, dear! But, what does it mean? Do you think, it points towards the way to the Holy Grail?” Nova asked.

“Yes, I do. I do understand what it means. So, now my job is straight, to discover where Father Damian has hidden the Holy Grail!”

“So, dear what is your next plan?” She asked very excitedly.

“Now, we can almost confirm that, C.O.H members are the perpetrators behind all these murders. Do you remember the sensational news appeared in Kretton Daily a few months ago that, thirteen young girls of thirteen years of age disappeared from their houses? All these young girls disappeared on the same day from their houses, in 13 different places. But after a month, the Police found their dead bodies from one place- ‘Death Mystery Valley’! Their heads were separated from their torso. If we can believe Miller’s diary, we can conclude that C.O.H cult is the sect behind all these coldblooded murders.” Jack said.

He continued after a pause: “My assumption is, it is the same perpetrator who killed both Father Damian and Inspector Davidson. From the evidence I gathered, I realized that both of them knew this guy, Baal, personally. On the night Father Damian was killed, he and Baal had a meeting in the garden. Then, there might have had an argument about the Holy Grail. The C.O.H cult leader Baal knew from some sources that Father Damian preserved the Holy Grail somewhere. Baal might have threatened Father Damian to disclose the secret but he might have declined. An angry Baal might have brutally murdered Father Damian.”

Jack paused for a moment and continued:

“From the narration given by Fr. Jerome, Inspector Damian recognized who the perpetrator is. When the perpetrator visited the monastery regularly, his motive was not attending the Holy Mass, but to rob the Holy Grail. Besides, Davidson retrieved the walking stick belonging to Baal from the murder site. He advised Baal to report before him at Arthurton for further interrogation. I think, that lost walking stick found by the Police bear some significance and that may be the reason why Baal decided to meet up with Davidson when he demanded Baal

to meet him. Otherwise Baal might have fled the crime scene long ago! So, to get back his valuable walking stick he might have gone to Arthurton and the meeting eventually resulted in the death of Inspector Davidson.”

Jack stopped for a moment and continued:

“But, when I analysed the available evidences, I still can’t confirm, how an old man can kill such a smart and efficient inspector like Davidson. If the old man was a stranger for inspector Davidson then he would have taken precautions to defend himself, before their meeting. So, that’s why I presume that Davidson knew the old man Baal before. Even for Father Damian, Baal was not a stranger. Father Damian pretended in front of other friars that he didn’t know this old man. I checked Father Damian’s family history and I realized that Baal was Father Damian’s uncle! The Man with the Walking stick was Father Damian’s dad’s elder brother!!”

“Baal’s original name is Martin Springfield. Father Damian is Damian Springfield, the son of Brad Springfield and the brother of Martin Springfield. Do you know Davidson’s full name? It is Davidson Springfield. He is the son of this Martin Springfield, who is also known as Baal in the *COH* cult. That means, Father Damian and inspector Davidson are first cousins! So, Martin Springfield killed his own son and nephew for his self rescue. On one side, he killed his nephew for the Holy Grail, and on the other side, he killed his own son for the walking stick. So, I checked what is special about the Walking Stick. Why it is so important for Baal? We know, Holy Grail is a priceless treasure. But, why did he kill his own son just for a walking stick? So, there is a hidden secret behind it.”

“So, what is your final conclusion?” Nova asked.

Jack looked at her beautiful face. He found that tears were flowing down from her eyes wetting her cheeks.

“Honey, what happened?” He asked while wiping away her tears with his hand.

“I don’t know Jack! I feel that your life is at stake. Don’t go away from me with this investigation, please.... Let someone else go and find the Holy Grail. I want you to be safe and sound and be with me always. If something happens to you, I would die with a broken heart.”

“Be happy my sweetie, nothing will happen. If I am not proceeding further with my adventure and retrieve the Holy Grail, how can I keep my word given to Father John of the Cross?

Moreover, this is a golden opportunity for me to prove myself before the society; also to your parents!”

“So, if it is your final decision, please let me accompany you in this task!” Jack saw an extraordinary courage gleaming in her eyes!

“My dear child, how can I permit you to come with me, when I foresee dangers encircling me. What you can do is to pray for me to Jesus Christ, Holy Mother, St. Joseph, all Angels, all Saints and all the Holy Souls in Purgatory to embrace me with good luck in my endeavours. I need your support not through your presence, but through your strong and fervent prayers. So, please stay back and do it for me. PRAYER, FASTING, DREAM AND HARD WORK ALTOGETHER CAN CREATE MIRACLES, WHEN NO HOPE LEFT FOR OUR SUCCESS. So, trust me, I will be back soon.”

CHAPTER- 16

THE QUEST FOR HOLY GRAIL BEGINS

The history of Children Of Hell (C.O.H) cult, started 7 centuries ago, precisely in AD 1406, by famous Italian scholar Marco Luigi who was excommunicated from the Catholic Church, for reasons of his extramarital relationship with many girls. His immoral actions were questioned by his wife; so, he killed his wife and two children- a boy and a girl. When his misdeeds were questioned by the Church authorities he became rebellious and started a new sect.

He taught everything against the Catholic dogma. Catholic church adores the Holy Trinity- One God, the Father as the creator of everything in the universe.

On the other hand, *COH* (Children of Hell) asserts that Satan is their master and the human beings are his servants. They proclaim that God is created by Satan and Satan is powerful than God. Besides spreading this heresy, they try to create hatred among the mankind and between countries. Their ultimate goal is to destroy human generations and keep everything under their sovereignty.

The venom of hatred towards Catholic Church was spread by Marco Luigi and his followers. Among his followers there were many famous people like Martin Luther, Leonardo Da Vinci, John Calvin. Their main goal was to completely wipe out Catholic Church from the world. So these false prophets possessed by Satan himself acted like good teachers and gained many souls through their false teachings.

Even though they are against Christianity and Catholic Church, they believe that Holy Grail and other Christian religious objects has special power to conquer this world. So, their crooked plan to steal the Holy Grail and conquer this world started since time immemorial. All the members in *COH* cult are very powerful through their wealth, health, capacities, abilities, as they are possessed by demons. Those possessed people have great determination to lead the souls towards Satan and drag the victimised souls into Hell. God's rights are their wrongs, so they promote sins and blasphemies.

After talking to Nova, Jack opened an olden scroll parchment with ancient Italian writings in it. The parchment was from thirteenth century. The Italian language in it revealed that, it was written by a noble Italian man during that period. Those days, the educational system was only accessible for the people from rich family. Jack Batson was an expert in Italian language, which helped him to translate the following letter easily:

" My dear Bernardo,

You were asking me for so many years how that day will come into the world. I was asking our Lord the same question, and yesterday I got a vision. I was sitting in my room and praying and suddenly I got a message from our Lord Jesus Christ. I could see myself as walking through the Saint Peters Basilica where the Holy Grail was placed upon the altar. I wished to grab and kiss it; so I reached beside it.

Suddenly the Holy Grail raised in the air. It flew out from the basilica floating in the air. As it flew away from me, I tried to chase it. I followed it for many miles and finally reached a forest in front of a cave, the shape of which was like a big skull. It was a huge cave guarded by a gigantic tall man of nearly 6'5 feet. He held a sword in his hand. He raised it into the sky and called for Satan; suddenly Satan appeared in front of him and blessed him with a curse. Then the name Antichrist appeared on his forehead and that name disappeared as though it dissolved into his forehead. The next moment when I looked at him, I saw the Holy Grail in his hand.

In the next vision, the Antichrist was standing in front of a church and millions of people gathered around him. All of them bowed in front of him, and worshipped him. I could see him performing many miracles, and the people got healed from severe diseases. I could see many churches abandoned by the people. I saw, even the bishops, priests, nuns, and other religious people abandoning their religious life and accepting Antichrist as their saviour. All those people went to the Antichrist, bowed in front of him and adored him as their God.

After these revelations, I got another message from Heaven which prophesied the coming of the Antichrist into the world. After a few centuries, one of the true disciples of Jesus Christ, who would be a warrior like his patron saint, will reign the throne of Saint Peter the Apostle. After being enthroned, he would choose my name for His Papacy. He will be a real saint like his predecessors and would lead the Church in truth.

As the result of His good leadership the Church will go through the right path, so Satan will be more infuriated by His Papacy. The Pope will have many enemies even inside the

Church; but majority of the believers will follow Him. So Satan will send Antichrist into the world to tempt and destruct the souls of God's own people. Even the faithful and chosen one will follow Antichrist and his teachings.

So after the Antichrist's birth, the Holy Grail will disappear from its place as an indication for the people to believe that Antichrist has come into the world. The Antichrist will take birth from a prostitute, and within one week, he will grow into a 30 years old man.

May the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always,

With Love and Blessings,

Jesus' humble servant and your Father,

Francis of Assisi".

Jack finished the parchment and gave it to Nova for her to read.

"So dear, do you believe that Antichrist has come into the world?" Nova was anxious.

"Yes, my honey, I do believe it. This letter is written by Saint Francis of Assisi to his very first disciple Bernardo. If you deeply understand the meaning in this letter you can untie the riddles contained in it. It says about the coming of Antichrist and the Pope who will reign the Church at that time. It says, the Pope, whose patron saint is a warrior will choose Francis as his name for papacy. So, the saintly Pope referred in this letter is Pope Francis. Papa's original name is Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Jorge refers to his patron saint- Saint George- who was a warrior. And another thing to be noted here is that the Holy Grail disappeared from the Monastery. So, it means the Antichrist is born into the world."

"So, is it the end of the world?" Nova asked.

"I don't know Nova, only God knows!" Jack replied.

"Do you have any clue about the place, where Father Damian hid the Holy Grail safely?" Nova asked.

"I have a vague idea about that hidden place. Can you please pass me Miller's diary? I hope that the riddle in this diary can help me to finish my adventure successfully."

Nova handed over him Miller's diary and he read the last page in it:

"Who made it

The one who gifted

Who used it

The one who saved us

Who took it

The Alpha in shepherd's skin

Who dug it

The one who die for it

Who get it

The one from South

How to get it

Walk to the face of the Lord

Where to find it

In the place of our end

Where is it

Where our very first parents sleep."

After reading that riddle again, he wrote notes in his book, and finally looked at Nova. Her eyes were wide with amazement and she was thinking what that meant.

"My dear Nova, now I understand who committed all these murders, and where Father Damian hid the Holy Grail. Now, you may go home and I have some other duties to complete today. Pray for my success and I will meet you soon."

"But, Jack, before you go, can you please explain the secret in this riddle?"

"I will explain everything to you sweet heart. Actually, it contains every information, that I

need for the accomplishment of this task. I will tell you everything when we meet again. So, bye my angel.” By saying this Jack left the library and reached the car garage. Nova followed him, but, he didn’t wait for her. He was in a hurry.... Jack got into his car and left Batson Bungalow.

CHAPTER- 17

THE HOLY GRAIL

Jack Batson reached behind the outside wall of the monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus. He parked his car among the bushes to hide it from the public in a safe place. It was 7'O clock in the evening. The Sun had already set in the western horizon. It was too dark everywhere. He alighted from the car and started to walk among the trees. While walking he looked at every direction, as though he was expecting someone's attack from the darkness.

He switched on his small torch light to see the way clearly. He could hear the howling of the wolves from the darkness. But, it didn't slowdown his strong determination to complete his adventure. While he proceeded further, a heavy wind blew from northern direction, as though to block him from his quest. Suddenly an unexpected tornado approached and swallowed him.

When Jack regained his consciousness, he was lying somewhere in the darkness. He looked around, but nothing was visible and everything was dark. He couldn't guess where he was.

After a while, he saw a few candle lights approaching him like a procession, floating in the air. He stood up and waited there patiently watching the movement of that candle lights.

He looked around to see whether anyone was watching over him. But, he couldn't see anyone. The only thing he could see was the candle lights. Suddenly a hot wind blew upon him followed by a nasty smell. The smell of sulphur and decaying human bodies filled the air. A few stars were twinkling over his head, in the sky. He realized that he was standing somewhere on a muddy ground.

While he looked at the procession the number of candles approached him multiplied. He switched off the light and checked the safety of the surroundings where he was standing. Suddenly he became happy to know that he had reached his destination. It was an old cemetery located behind the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus.

The procession was a group of people, clad in strange dresses that reminded him of devils. Suddenly, he felt like a fire coal burning from inside his heart.

“Move further, Move further!” He could hear a voice from inside.

Jack moved further towards the candle procession and stopped behind a tree to study them closely. They were singing songs while proceeding further. They stopped their parade and gathered in a circle, just a hundred metres away from him. While he ambushed behind the tree, he could listen to what they were singing. Those were some strange songs mixed with blasphemies.

It was very shocking to hear such songs and he realized that they belong to C.O.H cult. They continued their rituals and the songs raised into high pitch. Gradually Jack could understand the meaning of their songs. They were praying to Satan to come into their life and curse them. They used many curses and blasphemies to appease Satan for their mistakes they have done against him. Slowly he understood that they were possessed by many demons. They were yelling and screaming besides saying sacrileges, to persuade Satan to give them apparition.

Their faces were not clearly recognizable and he didn't understand what they were doing inside that circle. He was sure that they can't easily find him at his hiding place. So he slowly moved towards another tree and hid behind it where he could see them more clearly. All the people in that group had carried black candles in their hands. The candles vomited out red fire that danced in the air. The dark smokes from the fire raised into the air and disappeared in the darkness.

Again, he moved more closely towards the group. Suddenly, he heard someone warning him from the darkness: "Stop and hide behind that tree trunk!" He was shocked to hear that unexpected voice. To escape from the stranger in the darkness, he started running. Suddenly he stumbled and fell down onto a marble slab. When he fell down a lightning appeared in the sky and he could clearly identify where he was. It was a tomb of someone. He read the words that engraved upon the tomb:

"ADAM ANDREW

(The real son of Satan)

Born : 12th March 1872

Born in Hell: 23rd July 1913

EVE ADAM

(the beautiful wife of Adam Andrew)

Born: 24th February 1876

Born in Hell: 11th October 1914

You are the leaders of the Anti-Apostles. You are cursed to be the ancestors of the Antichrist, and he may curse you for your happiness in Hell. The Lord Satan may strangle you with his cursing love, and drown you into the lake of fire with him. Long Live with Hatred in Hell."

He was shocked to read these strange words engraved upon the tomb. Yet, he was a bit happy in his mind as his adventure is almost finished now. His only intention behind coming to that cemetery was to discover the same tomb where he is now. In the lightning followed, he looked at the head side of the tomb and stunned to see a still worst thing. It was a terrifying sculpture of Satan carrying an upside down cross in its left hand! Besides, a snake was tangled around that cross. Nearby that sculpture stood the statue of a demon, that pierced the same cross with a spear.

In another flash of lightning, he felt like the Satan statue was staring at him. Behind that hideous sculptures, a woman's figure emerged. She had worn a black dress and carried a baby in her arms. Suddenly Jack remembered the lady, who came to visit him before the beginning of his adventure.

"Who is that?" Jack asked himself.

By saying this, Jack got up from the tomb and approached her. He couldn't see her face, yet he felt that he knows her personally.

"Hi, dear young lady, who are you and what are you doing here? Don't you know that, it is not a safe place? Come with me...Please come with me!"

Before he could complete these words, he heard an ear-splitting crack of thunder from the sky, and a heavy rain followed. The lightning sustained in the sky and Jack could see the pathway which can help him to take her outside from that hellish place. Jack grabbed her right arm and tried to pull her towards the pathway. But the lady wasn't willing to move!

Jack insisted her to escape from that hellish place, but his effort was in vain. So, he grabbed her child from her arms, with an intention to save that child at least, from danger.

When he snatched away the child from her arms, he felt the baby like a lightweight object. But, suddenly, the child's body weight started to increase every second. The lady stood there like a statue and didn't turn her face towards him.

Suddenly a heavy hand caught on his wrist and the child slipped onto the ground from his arms. He tried to bend down and take the child, but he couldn't move even his fingers, as though his whole body was numbed. He stood there like a statue soaked himself in the rain. Lightning and heavy rain continued.... He turned back to check, who was holding his hand. It was the same lady, whose life he tried to save from the cemetery.

In the next lightning, she turned towards him and he could see her face clearly. It was an old woman with wrinkled skin and one eye, who resembled someone whom he met before.

“Agatha!” Jack yelled.

When he said that name, her eyes became red with anger, and glistened like ember in the darkness. Her teeth were very sharp like the vampire women in the horror stories.

Jack tried to escape from her grip pulling and twisting her hand, but, he failed. When he tried to escape from her, she tightened her grip more firmly. Suddenly, another hand gripped around his right wrist. Hiding his shock, he looked at the right side. It was the child, who fell from his hand. In fact, he was not just an ordinary child; he was possessed by thousands of demons.

When Jack looked at him, fire was sparkling from his eyes. The demon opened his mouth widely and a colony of bats came out from it. The demon shut his mouth and opened it again. Jack noticed his sharp teeth, and suddenly he started to roar like a wounded lion.

Meanwhile a horrible thunder echoed in the sky, and suddenly the rain stopped. In the meantime the satanic cult finished their rituals, and approached Jack and the rest in a procession. Everyone in the cult gathered around them and stared at Jack.

“Who are you stupid angel? How dare you to come into our territory?” The old woman Agatha shouted angrily.

“I am not afraid of anyone. Who are you to threaten me?” Jack bounced back.

“I am the mother of Antichrist!” She replied.

It was not a long answer, but it was an unexpected shocking answer that turned him upside down with terror. The lightning continued and he could see her face more clearly. She reminded him of an old sorceress from the medieval period.

Suddenly a heavy hand fell upon Jack Batson’s right shoulder and he turned his head to know who was standing beside him. He could see the child had grown up to a man of 30 years! He had a thick moustache, long beard, cat eyes and 7’ feet tall. His reddish eyes bulged out when he stared at Jack angrily.

“Who are you and what do you want?” Jack asked, hiding his fear.

“I am the Antichrist!” He roared.

When he said this, the earth started to quake and hurled Jack into a distance. He could see the cemetery ground quaking furiously, like it was the doomsday! Suddenly, the middle of the ground opened widely, and he could see the lake of fire in the abyss. He nearly fainted and trembled to see many moaning souls in it.

Jack had never seen such a horrible view in his life. He could identify many of those souls. Among them were the departed souls of the rich and famous people, who are honoured by the world, for their success in this worldly life. When they saw Jack they started to yell and groan at him. They were speaking blasphemies and cursing God for their sufferings.

Then suddenly he could see a horrible monster with complete dark body. It started to climb up from the lake of fire.

“Satan, my father, I pray to you, to come for my aid!” The Antichrist begged.

Satan increased his speed, as though he was in a hurry to reach the ground. Besides being dark like night, he had two dark large wings at the back. The next moment, he used his wings and started to fly upwards, finally landing in front of Jack!

Satan was very tall, taller than an elephant. His eyes were vomiting out fire sparks from it. He had no hairs upon his head, but had thick dark sparking eyebrows. He stared at Jack, such a terrible look of hatred. He had two horns, like a bull has upon its head. He wagged his long dark pointed tail while staring at Jack. He was completely naked, but a type of black smoke had covered his nudity, below his waist. From the smoke, he could smell sulphur, that gave

him severe headache. Many souls from hell followed Satan, climbed up from the abyss of hell and finally reached the cemetery ground.

After these terrible incidents, Jack feared that, he can't accomplish his mission. He decided that he would fail in his mission. He looked at the people gathered around him, and identified a few among them. Among them were a famous atheist and a young actor, who died a few days ago. Again, he recognized many celebrities, living and expired, from that group. After the living souls and deadly souls, many devils also climbed up from the abyss and reached the cemetery. All of them were yelling and groaning and cursing God.

“Satan, my father, I could trap many people and mislead them to the wrong way. Very soon, they will be yours, father.” The Antichrist said proudly.

Satan hugged Antichrist and his mother, and finally he started to talk to Antichrist:

“I am giving you my power and authority over this world. Go and defeat Catholic Church, which is His own foundation. Defeat and destroy His Vicar, and mislead every people in the world who was created in his own image. Generate hatred among the people, believe in different religions. If you succeed, I will enthrone you, and give you the position after me, in Hell”

Jack then remembered the prophesy of Holy Mother Mary about the birth of the Anti-Christ that She revealed to the French visionary, St. Bernaditta Gonsalves of Lourdes.

While he was thinking about this, some souls of the deceased started jumping back into the fire lake. But, those who hesitated to jump back were hurled by Antichrist, Satan and his devils.

“The next is you Devil!” Antichrist and Satan approached Jack by yelling sacrileges. Jack moved backwards and searched for a way to escape.

Suddenly the rain and lightning stopped. A heavy thunder, like an atomic bomb explosion, reverberated in the sky. The sound and power of that explosion was more than enough to shake the whole world and tear it into many pieces. The earth started to shake and Jack fell down onto the ground. He could see Satan, Antichrist, his mother and all the other devils falling back into the fires of Hell. After this, peace spread everywhere.

Jack stood on the ground, and looked at the sky. He could see the vision of Heaven there. God, the Father Almighty, was crying and his tears fell down into the lake of fire. At the same moment, the fire in the lake extinguished, and the vision of hell disappeared.

Suddenly the sky illuminated with many stars and full moon and it emitted as much light as in the day time. The whole cemetery was flooded with light.

Jack felt like somebody standing beside him. He saw a beautiful lady with a baby boy in her arms. It was the same lady and boy, who visited Jack one evening in his home and gave the Rosary in the very beginning of his adventure. Beside that beautiful lady, two young men of around 30 years of age were also stood. One of the men had thick moustache and beard, but other was clean shaven.

The infant in the lady's arms, gave Jack something, and he received it with his both hands. He looked at it, to know that it was a golden chalice, decorated with many gems.

"Thank you Jesus, thank you Holy Mother, thank you Saint Joseph, thank you Saint Michael the Archangel." Jack kissed that chalice. He couldn't control his emotions and started to cry. It was the *Holy Grail* used by Lord Jesus Christ, which he was looking for all these days!

"My dear child, it is not the end of the battle. You must continue your battle against Satan and his evil spirits. But, don't be afraid. I am always with you." Infant Jesus said.

After saying this, Infant Jesus placed His right hand upon Jack Batson's head, and blessed him. Again, Jesus breathed upon him and said:

"I am giving you my Holy Spirit, the Giver of life, Who will lead you through the right path. He will empower you to fight against the darkness and defeat all the evil spirits. Besides, with His help, you will attract many people to me."

"Oh Lord, now I understand; it was Four of You, who directed Father John of the Cross to visit me. In the beginning when Father John visited me to entrust this duty, he had told me that four people instructed him to handover this duty to me. He also disclosed that the group of four included a charming infant baby, a beautiful lady and two handsome men. Am I right?"

"Yes, my child, it was we who insisted Father John to handover this duty to you?" Infant Jesus said.

Jack Batson raised the Holy Grail, and kissed it with awe. After kissing it, he asked another question to Infant Jesus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for finally hearing my prayers. Lord, I need answer for one more question. Would you please allow me to ask that?"

“Yes, my dear child, ask me!” Jesus replied.

“Lord, many people achieve great things in their life. Some people make wealth, marry their sweet heart, or may reach higher positions, even then many of them are not completely happy in their life. I have read the life of the saints, who are completely happy, even when they could achieve nothing belong to this temporal world. They never possessed any wealth or positions. Other people ridiculed them and called them crazy. Even in the middle of these sufferings and sacrifices they could be happy. How, Lord...how is it possible? I want to be happy like them!”

“TO BE HAPPY IN YOUR LIFE, GIVE OTHERS EVERYTHING YOU HAVE, WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING BACK.”

After this, four of them blessed Jack and disappeared from the cemetery. Then Jack heard a song from Heaven and Purgatory:

“Sanctus Deus, Sanctus Fortis, Sanctus Immortalis, miserere nobis.”

The song continued with the support of Heavenly musical organs. After that song, Jack could see the following written in the sky. He read it:

NEVER LOSE YOUR HOPE AND TRY HARD UNTIL YOU DIE. BECAUSE, NOBODY KNOWS WHEN SUCCESS WILL HUG YOU.

EPILOGUE

After Jack discovered the Holy Grail, he went to meet Fr. John of the Cross. Fr. John was very happy to see him with the Holy Grail. Jack gave information to the Police and they arrested Martin Springfield from the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus. The Police charged three murder cases upon him. His coldblooded murder victims were: Father Damian, Inspector Davidson and finally Father Jerome. It was not Fr. Jerome, who talked with Inspector Davidson when he went to investigate the murder of Fr. Damian. It was Martin Springfield who disguised himself as Fr. Jerome. Martin Springfield is notorious with his other name Baal.

After the arrest of Baal, the Supreme Court of Billston sentenced him for lifelong imprisonment. Subsequently Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus regained its usual serenity which was lost after the serial murders of its priests.

After these incidents, Jack and Fr. John went together to meet His Holiness Pope Francis. Jack narrated the whole story, how he retrieved the Holy Grail. Pope Francis and Father John was amazed to hear his adventure story and congratulated him for his braveness and dedication.

Then Jack got the opportunity to have dinner with Pope Francis and Father John. During the dinner, Father John handed him a nine hundred thousand Hostos cheque, as promised. Jack deposited the total one million Hostos in his bank account.

Jack, who was once ridiculed by everyone as useless, became a celebrity and adventurer as he dreamed.

After this, Jack's fame started to spread through different media, all over the world. His hard work and dedication got answered. Jesus' blessings helped him to become successful in his life and people started to call him: 'Jack Batson, the Adventurer', and 'Jack Batson, the Detective'.

A few days passed and Jack Batson was sitting in the same park with Nova Flower, where they met last time, just before the beginning of his adventure.

"So, what do you think now, my sweetheart?" Jack asked her to know her opinion about their marriage.

"Dear boy, why don't you understand me? You told me many times that you know my heart better than anyone else in this world. Yet you couldn't understand my heart! If a girl tells you

to come and ask her parents' permission to marry her, what does it mean?" Nova pretended to be angry.

"Honey, don't take it seriously!" Jack hugged her. Then he continued:

"That means, you love me more than I love you!"

"Please meet my parents, and tell them everything." Nova requested and looked into his eyes.

When Nova looked at him, Jack looked back into her beautiful shining eyes. She was very proud of his success and tears filled her eyes out of happiness.

He kissed her cheeks and held her closer to him.

"My dear child, the tears that are coming down from your eyes are more than enough for me to understand that you are mine and I am yours." Jack Batson whispered in her ears.

"Please come with me to see my parents!" Nova said calmly while placing her head onto his chest.

"But, if I come and ask your parents, will they agree for our marriage?" Jack asked doubtfully.

While they continued their conversation, Jack's mobile phone started to ring.

"Hi, Jack Batson speaking!" He answered coolly.

"Sir, my name is Arthur and I am from Garry Field. I wish to talk to you on an urgent matter regarding my family. We are a big family of more than thousand members. Many of our family members are committing suicide without any reason. I am worried sir. Could you please allow me to meet you today? I came from faraway only to meet you. Now I am staying in Hotel Alfred in Beccurshare. This year 23 people in our family already lost their life. Father John of the Cross gave me your number and advised me to meet you. He suggested that, you are the right person to unravel the mystery behind the curse that is haunting my family. So, I beg you, please help me."

"But, Mr. Arthur, I beg your pardon, I am not free today to meet you. Can you please come tomorrow?" Jack replied and looked at Nova.

"But, sir, it is very urgent, please help me!" He begged.

"But, Mr. Arthur, please do understand. I am very busy today, and not at all free the whole day."

Jack Batson wished to meet Nova's parents, as he promised her. Nova intervened in the matter and told him:

"Jack, nothing will happen within one day. Please, don't hesitate to help the people who are begging for help. Please tell him that you will be back home within one hour. I am OK with that. Why should you worry about me? Please go and meet him first, then come home with your proposal tomorrow." Nova said. Jack got amazed at her generosity and consideration.

"O.K, Arthur. Please come and meet me at my place after one hour. I will wait for you there."

"Thank you, sir, thank you for your kindness." He said.

"Dear bro. Don't lose heart.... Let me see, what I can do for you!" Jack consoled him.

"Thank you sir, you are very kind. See you soon. Bye sir!" The man said by controlling his emotions....

Then Jack turned back to Nova:

"Sweetie, how nice are you! You are an Angel! Because, you give priority for others distress... And you don't care about your own life...You want to wipe away others tears."

"I am just a human being darling. But, you call me an Angel, because you love me so much. My sweet Jack, WHEN GOD GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO HELP A HELPLESS PERSON, DON'T AVOID THEM. BECAUSE, IT IS THE SAME GOD, WHO BLESSED YOU TO REACH AT THIS HEIGHT."

"Yes, my dear girl, I do understand my shortcomings. Thanks for opening my eyes!" Jack thanked Nova.

"It is not like that, dear. I know you wished to go. But, you said No to him, only because of me. If God has promised you that I would become your wife, who can snatch me away from you! So, meet your next client and come back tomorrow. Please drop me back home while you go back. I shall pray for my future husband's success, in his next adventure."

Both got into the car and Jack drove homewards to drop off his sweet heart Nova. On the way back home, Nova asked him how he could extract the information from the riddle (that they saw in Miller's diary) that Holy Grail was hidden in the cemetery belonging to the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus.

"My sweetie, if you read my notes you will understand how I found the information."

Then Jack Batson took a paper from the dashboard and gave it to Nova. She read the following notes in that paper:

“Who made it?

The one who gifted.

Ans: Joseph of Arimathea. The stories say Joseph of Arimathea was the owner of the Holy Grail and he gifted it to Jesus Christ to celebrate Lord's last supper.

Who used it?

The one who saved us.

Ans: Lord Jesus Christ saved all human beings from sins. He gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Who took it?

The Alpha in shepherd's skin.

Ans: Alpha is the leader of wolf packs. Priests are considered as Shepherds. This means, a wolf has entered the Shepherd's position. That is, Alpha (Baal) has become Shepherd (Father Jerome), because he is the Abbot; the leader in the Monastery. So here, the shepherd is no more in the position. The Alpha has entered into the Abbot's position.

Who dug it?

The one who die for it

Ans: Father Damian. Father Damian dug the Holy Grail somewhere and martyred his life, to protect the Holy Grail.

Who get it?

The one from South?

Ans: We are living in the South side of Billston, and in this sentence, he talks about me. Because I think, he got a message from God that I will go and retrieve the Holy Grail.

How to get it?

Walk to the face of the Lord

Ans: Face of the Lord means, go to the Monastery of the Holy Face of Jesus

Where to find it?

In the place of our end.

Ans: Cemetery is the place of our end. So, it is about the cemetery, that belongs to the Monastery.

Where is it?

Where our very first parents sleep.”

Ans: Our very first parents are Adam and Eve. It means, find the tomb belongs to a couple named Adam and Eve. (NB: Even though cemetery belongs to the Monastery, many people consider the Monastery as their own parish church. So, not only the monks but also the common people are buried in the cemetery).

While driving the car, every painful moments that happened in his life has gone through his mind like in a movie screen. He thanked Jesus for helping him to become successful. He also thanked Jesus for giving Nova to love him. Then he heard a crystal-clear voice as talking to him:

“TRUST IN GOD AND HE WILL CREATE MIRACLES IN YOUR LIFE, TO KEEP YOUR TRUST.”

THE END

FINAL WORD FROM AUTHOR:

My dearest readers may think why this book needs a conclusion when I already narrated the whole story. But it is not the end... It is just the beginning. This story teaches you a worldly truth: At present, whatever be your situation, it doesn't matter. People may call you a crap or useless or 'good for nothing'; but your God, your lovely Father, is going to intervene in your problems, at an unexpected time, in a miraculous way. So to see and experience miracles in your life, you should believe in God and in your own abilities. Don't be afraid, God is always with you.

The Holy Grail in this story represents your dreams. You may go through different pains, struggles and sacrifices in your life. But, believe me... one day you will discover your Holy Grail.

I wish you all the best.

If this story really inspired you, please write a review or give your valuable feedback on the following media and I shall get back to you.

Email: jackbatsonseries@gmail.com

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/gkadappur>

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With Love,

Georgekutty Adappur